



'Posh' Spice meets ex-Spice

Gerri Halliwell

LONDON (AFP) — Victoria Adams, "The Spice" in the Spice Girls band, had dinner in the French Riviera town of Saint Tropez at the weekend with ex-Spice Gerri Halliwell, the Sun reports. Monday. It carried a picture of the pair, scotching rumours that Gerri and the remaining members of the girls band were no longer speaking terms since Gerri's "Ginger Spice" departure from the group in June to seek a solo career.

Prince William the brightest member of royal family

LONDON (AFP) — Prince William, the elder of the sons of the late Prince Diana and Prince Charles, the most intelligent member of the royal family, manoeuvred Monday, publishing the teenager's results. The paper revealed that the 16-year-old prince, who is being educated at Eton, one of England's most prestigious schools, passed with flying colours nine subjects at GCSE, exams normally taken at age 16. He had already passed three passes at A-level.

'Dinosaurs lived side by side'

GENEVA (AFP) — Tracks discovered side by side in Bolivia show many species of dinosaurs that lived the same millions of years lived by side. According to the paleontologist, Dr. Meyer of the University of Basel, the tracks of a Coelocursor, a small dinosaur, and a large sauropod, a long-necked dinosaur, were found side by side. The tracks were found in a 100-million-year-old rock formation.

Birkett quits after dealing with 'degenerate tourists'

LONDON (AFP) — The vice-consul of the British holiday resort of Birkett, saying he was able to be Birkett after dealing with "degenerate tourists" who were at the resort during the holiday season, said he was leaving the post. The vice-consul, who had been in the post for 10 years, said he was leaving because he was "fed up" with the "degenerate tourists" who were at the resort during the holiday season.

Lewinsky's saga could turn into the highest-priced story in history

NEW YORK (AP) — Bidding for the rights to the Lewinsky saga could turn into the highest-priced story in history. The rights to the story of the relationship between President Clinton and Monica Lewinsky are being sold by a consortium of publishers. The consortium is led by Time Inc. and includes other major publishers. The rights to the story are being sold for a record price.

Lyonne realises lifelong dream

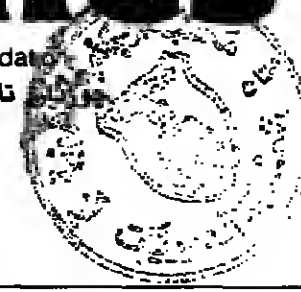
NEW YORK (AP) — A 19-year-old girl, Lyonne, has realised her lifelong dream of becoming a professional dancer. Lyonne, who is from New York, has been dancing since she was a child. She has been dancing for 15 years and has been a professional dancer for 10 years. She has been dancing for 15 years and has been a professional dancer for 10 years.

10 Syrians rescued after ship sinks

NICOSIA (AP) — British Royal Air Force and Cyprus police helicopters carried out a joint rescue operation on Tuesday to retrieve 10 sailors who abandoned a cargo ship sinking off the coast. The Belise-registered 2,000-tonne Fender 1 was reported sinking 48 kilometres south of Cape Akrotiri, the Cyprus Rescue Coordination Centre reported. A centre official said the 10 Syrian crew members, who abandoned the ship in lifeboats, were all brought to shore by the helicopters. "All crewmen have been flown to Paphos hospital in west Cyprus and all are reported safe," said Mervyn Wynne Jones, spokesman for the British bases on the island. The ship left Cyprus' Limassol harbour on Monday night bound for Turkey, developed engine trouble and started sinking, the crew told police in Paphos.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
مؤسسة الصحافة الأردنية المستقلة



Volume 23 Number 6932

AMMAN WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 1998, JUMADA I 11, 1419

Price: Jordan 200 fils

In meeting with union members Regent underlines need for translating slogans into action

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Tuesday called for continued cooperation and consultation among civil society institutions and underlined the need for translating slogans into action. The Regent was addressing a meeting of members of the Council of Professional Associations and members of the Federation of the Jordanian Labour Unions in the presence of Prime Minister Fayez Tarawneh, Royal Court Chief Jawad Anani and Minister of Information Nasser Judeh.



His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, is flanked by heads of professional and labour unions after a meeting at the Royal Court on Tuesday (Photo by Boghos)

"We are meeting here to reaffirm the need for active and responsible participation of all concerned parties in development programmes and finding solutions for problems that are facing us," the Regent stressed the fact that all are partners in shouldering responsibility and working as a team. Prince Hassan said political parties have a basic role to play, one that requires support. Unions also have a basic role to play in the construction of the civic society and the state of law. The Regent underlined the need for continued dialogue among various sectors in implementing His Majesty King Hussein's directives as contained in the letter of designation to the new government. He stressed the importance of continued consultations among the various state's institutions in a manner that would not leave some departments isolated from others. According to Prince Hassan, negative attitudes should not persist but rather addressed through national dialogue which aims at reforms, emphasising the need for working in a clear and transparent approach and through methods that aim at the common good. Thanking the unions for the role they had played in the past, Prince Hassan called for developing the work and performance of these unions which, he said, should define future visions and should contribute towards the development of the state's institutions. The Regent urged the unions to give due attention in promoting their professions and upgrading the efficiency of their members. Speaking at the meeting, Tarawneh pledged that the government will be totally committed to implementing the King's directives as contained in the letter of designation, stressing the government's intention to maintain dialogue with the unions.

Judeh: Anti-corruption squad saved treasury JD40m

AMMAN (Petra) — The Anti-Corruption Department, established in 1996, has saved the treasury JD40 million until June of this year by investigating 605 corruption cases and referring 336 people charged with corruption to court, according to Information Minister Nasser Judeh. Speaking to journalists at a regular press briefing, Judeh said the department dealt with 131 corruption cases in 1996, 304 cases in 1997 and 170 cases between January 1 and the end of June this year. As a result of these measures, the minister said, the department has saved the state's treasury JD40 million. According to Judeh, the department discovered and dealt with numerous cases of corruption last May and June involving employees working for the public sector in addition to cases connected with smuggling weapons, embezzlement and forgery. Altogether, 13 people suspected of involvement in these cases have so far been referred to the public prosecutor, Judeh said.

He pointed out in particular a case in which a local company tried to smuggle half a million dollars worth of garments from the Zarqa Free Zone claiming it planned to ship the garments abroad. Judeh said the company was found to have unloaded the garments in Amman and substituted the merchandise with other goods. In another case, an accountant at Jordan Telecommunications Company was found to have embezzled large sums of money by manipulating customer bills. The minister said the accountant used to receive the money from the public and register the bills on the accounts of official departments which do not pay for the calls. He said a committee was set up to conduct investigations and discovered that between 1995 and 1998 the accountant, who had some accomplices working with him, pocketed JD400,000.

In the field of health, Judeh said, the department has seized, a large amount of drugs which were illegally sold in the local markets and a machine for pricing drugs that was found in one of the pharmacies of Sweleh. Drugs are distributed already priced by the Ministry of Health. Other seizures by the department, said Judeh, included artefacts, mosaics, a metal detector, forged passports with visas for European countries, counterfeit U.S. dollars and forged cheques, among other items. He said people involved in these cases were Jordanian nationals and citizens from Arab and foreign countries. Smuggled items, he said, included telephone sets, receivers, facsimile machines, batteries, 1,000 watches and around 2 million Saudi riyals. Judeh said the smuggled items were seized in cooperation with the Customs Department.

Clinton urges Yeltsin not to let reforms slip

MOSCOW (R) — U.S. President Bill Clinton urged Kremlin chief Boris Yeltsin Tuesday not to turn his back on post-Soviet market reforms in his desperate effort to dig Russia out of crisis in the face of bitter Communist hostility. But, on the first of a two-day summit overshadowed by Moscow's slide into political and financial chaos, the Russian president and his would-be prime minister said a return to some state economic controls might be needed and hinted at policies that analysts say could reignite once-rampant inflation. "You can build a prosperous future if you stand strong and complete, not run from but complete, the transformation you began seven years ago," Clinton said in a speech to students. He warned against a return to "failed policies of the past."

"There will be no going back on reform," Yeltsin, quoted by his press service, assured Clinton after greeting the ally he calls "my friend Bill" with a bear-hug in the Kremlin. But ominously for Western leaders keen on Russia joining the world economy, he said: "Naturally, in certain situations, there could be some tactical adjustments to this course, including in terms of strengthening the state role in the economy."



Russian President Boris Yeltsin shows U.S. President Bill Clinton the original stars-and-stripes flag presented by a U.S. congressional delegation to a group of Russian merchants in 1866 before Tuesday's talks at the Kremlin (EPA photo)

Clinton said despite the slump U.S. economic policy was fundamentally sound and he would stick to a tight budget. And he rammed home the message that only similar democratic market reforms — no matter how painful — would persuade investors to support Russia. He stressed that was not "an American agenda" but "imperatives of the global marketplace." "I do not believe there are any painless solutions," he said in remarks seemingly aimed at Chernomyrdin, a former Soviet gas monopoly boss who has offered major concessions to the left. The concessions have so far done Chernomyrdin little good as the Communists who dominate the State Duma, lower house, reiterated their determination to prevent him from forming a new government. He was previously premier for five years until Yeltsin dropped him in March for the youthful Sergei Kiriyenko. As Clinton spoke, Chernomyrdin was saying he would go ahead, despite his rejection by the Duma on Monday, with forming an interim cabinet that would restore and control a market in the ruble and preserving the value of people's bank accounts. Some economists say Chernomyrdin's pledges to guarantee every ruble held in banks could mean simply printing money. For all the grim setting

By Fairouz Abu-Ghazaleh and Mohammad Ben Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The development of human resources, a very vital issue for all societies, is of particular significance to Jordan, a country with limited natural resources, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, said on Tuesday. In a speech delivered on his behalf by Minister of Water and Energy Hani Mulki during the opening ceremony of the Sixth National Science Week organised by the Higher Council for Science and Technology (HCST), the Regent said the responsibility of developing human resources is that of all sectors of the society. "Education and labour sectors are, together, responsible for human resource development," the Regent said. Deputising for the Crown Prince, His Royal Highness Prince Faisal attended the opening ceremony. The Crown Prince, chairperson of the HCST, also stressed that national security cannot be attained through economic progress only, but should be accompanied by achievements on the social and human levels and reflected in better standards for the people. "It is very important for us to remember that human resource development is not only an economic necessity, but a social and human obligation as well," he said. Turning to unemployment — estimated officially at 15 per cent — the Crown Prince said although unemployment is an economic problem, education plays a very vital role in combating the problem. He proposed different measures for enhancing the role of education in reducing the soaring number of jobless, such as developing educational policies, vocational training, public examinations and minimising the number of admissions to higher education. He also proposed coordination between vocational education at community colleges and the demands of the labour market, as well as increasing public awareness and encouraging people to accept available job opportunities. The Crown Prince also called for developing the local labour market in order to gradually phase out foreign labour. "Organising the foreign

labour force is an important issue in fighting unemployment," he said. "It is not sensible to host more than 300,000 foreign workers and then complain that we have 200,000 unemployed Jordanians." Around 200 participants, representing 90 institutions from the public and private sector as well as NGOs and members of regional and international organisations are taking part in the four-day conference entitled "A Strategy for Developing Human Resources." The conference will focus on three main areas: the educational system, managing and funding human resource development and organising the labour market and industrial policies and planning. The event is organised by the general secretariat of the HCST, the Royal Scientific Society, the National Council for Human Resource Development and the Armed Forces. The recommendations of the conference will be implemented in the upcoming "National Employment Conference," which is scheduled to take place later this month, according to head of the National Council for Human Resource Development, Munther Masri.

many differences remained. "There are contacts, but there is no agreement," Qoureira told the Associated Press. The basis for the negotiations is a U.S. proposal that Israel withdraw from 13 per cent of the West Bank. The Palestinians have agreed to the plan, while Israel initially said handing over 13 per cent would endanger Israel's security. However, earlier this month, Israel for the first time agreed in writing to a 13 per cent pullback, with several conditions attached. Excerpts from the document Moicho handed to Qoureira were published Monday in the Yediot Achronot daily. The document appeared to contradict assurances

Qoureira: Contacts with Israel continue, but no agreement yet

Agencies

DESPITE DISAGREEMENTS over a West Bank troop withdrawal, Israel and the Palestinians have not broken off their secret talks, a Palestinian negotiator said Tuesday. U.S. mediators told Palestinian President Yasser Arafat earlier this month he could not hope for high-profile U.S. involvement and that the Palestinians must negotiate with Israel directly. The low-key talks have been conducted by the speaker of the Palestinian Legislative Council, Ahmad Qoureira, and Yitzhak Molcho, an attorney and confidant of Israeli Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu. Qoureira said Tuesday that

many differences remained. "There are contacts, but there is no agreement," Qoureira told the Associated Press. The basis for the negotiations is a U.S. proposal that Israel withdraw from 13 per cent of the West Bank. The Palestinians have agreed to the plan, while Israel initially said handing over 13 per cent would endanger Israel's security. However, earlier this month, Israel for the first time agreed in writing to a 13 per cent pullback, with several conditions attached. Excerpts from the document Moicho handed to Qoureira were published Monday in the Yediot Achronot daily. The document appeared to contradict assurances

Netanyahu reportedly gave to hardline cabinet minister Limor Livnat last month that Israel had not committed itself to 13 per cent in writing. Netanyahu aides were quoted as playing down the document, saying it was an unsigned working paper. A key sticking point is Israel's demand that three per cent of the land be declared a nature reserve in which Palestinians will not be allowed to build. Overall control over security would remain in Israeli hands. The Palestinians have not objected to land use restrictions in principle, but want assurances that in the future they will take full control of areas designated nature

Iran's elite forces begin manoeuvres near Afghan border

TEHRAN (AFP) — Some 70,000 Iranian Revolutionary Guards began unprecedented exercises near the Afghan border Tuesday as the foreign ministry warned the Taliban over the fate of Iranian diplomats held by the Islamic militia in Afghanistan. The three-day manoeuvres, code named Ashura-3, are the largest exercises ever held in eastern Iran bordering Afghanistan and cover a 600-square-kilometre area from Turbat-e Jam to Khaf in eastern Khorasan province. The manoeuvres are aimed at boosting the elite force's "defence and deterrent capabilities in the

wake of new security demands and to ensure a rapid movement and intervention of the forces," Iran's official news agency IRNA said, citing military officials. The exercises also seek to "enhance expertise in the deployment of sophisticated equipment and weaponry in mountainous regions" of eastern Iran. Air, ground and volunteer units of the Revolutionary Guards are participating in Ashura-3, named after the day when seventh century Shiite Muslim leader Imam Hussein was killed in battle against so-called "infidels." The manoeuvres, well-publicised

in advance, come amid rising tension with the Taliban over the hard-line militia's seizure of nearly all of Afghanistan, where Iran has traditionally commanded political and cultural influence. Tehran has voiced fears of possible security threats from the Taliban rule in the neighbouring country, and accused the militia of engaging in drug trafficking to Europe via Iranian territory. Brigadier General Mohammad Ali Jafari, the commander of the guards' ground forces, said Iran's supreme leader and chief commander of the armed forces, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, had ordered the

exercises following the escalation of fighting in Afghanistan. "We will suppress any acts of banditry and possible aggression by the Taliban," he said, quoted by IRNA. "This manoeuvre is a warning to those elements who disturb security in the region." Jafari underscored the "threat" posed by the Sunni Muslim Taliban to the Shiite minority in Afghanistan. "Given the Taliban's animosity towards the Shiites, we have to pay close attention to possible threats from or acts of banditry from this group against our eastern

(Continued on page 3)

(Continued on page 3)

'No evidence of chemical weapons exposure in Gulf'

WASHINGTON (AP) — A U.S. Senate committee report concludes there is no evidence to support the theory that U.S. soldiers who fought in the Gulf war and then became mysteriously ill were exposed to nerve gas.

"We have found nothing to show that the illnesses are related to chemicals," said a Senate Veterans Affairs Committee official who spoke late Monday on condition of anonymity.

The panel planned to make the study public Tuesday.

The bipartisan report, prepared over the last year, backs the military's long-held assertion that chemical weapons were not to blame for the ill-

nesses. But it is highly critical of a Pentagon conclusion last year that up to 100,000 soldiers were exposed to low doses of nerve gases released in the demolition of an Iraqi ammunition depot in March 1991. That report said the doses were too small to have caused any sustained health problems, but it marked the first official acknowledgement that there was any exposure at all.

The Senate report argues there is no hard evidence to back the report's conclusions. It says the Pentagon, working with the CIA, relied on a flawed computer model to recreate the exposure levels

and assumed a worst-case scenario.

"There is insufficient evidence at this time to prove or disprove that there was actual low-level exposure of any troops to chemical weapon nerve agents or that any of the health effects some veterans are experiencing were caused by such exposure," Tuesday's editions of The Washington Post quoted the report as saying.

The source added to The Associated Press: "We think that the Pentagon may have overreacted based on the evidence it had." The Senate report concludes that there is just one case where there is hard evidence of chemical

exposure — that of Army Pfc. David Fisher, who was exposed to mustard liquid in March 1991.

Ironically, the Senate study backs up the Pentagon's original and long-held position that U.S. troops were not exposed to chemical weapons during the Gulf war, despite the mysterious illnesses many soldiers suffered.

After five years of denials, the Defense Department reported in the summer of 1996 that Americans were exposed to chemical fallout.

Initially, the department estimated that 20,000 troops were exposed, but that estimate climbed in subsequent months.



PROTESTS OVER MINISTRY'S CLOSURE: A Palestinian man riding his donkey passes by protesters Tuesday in the West Bank town of Hebron. Israeli authorities closed an office of the Palestinian ministry of supplies on August 31, prompting a sharp protest (AFP photo)

NEWS IN BRIEF

Civilian, soldier wounded in Lebanon

RASHAYA (AFP) — An Israeli soldier and a Lebanese woman were wounded during separate attacks Tuesday in southern Lebanon, military and police officials said. The soldier was slightly wounded by mortar fire Tuesday as his unit patrolled the Israeli-controlled buffer zone in south Lebanon, an Israeli army spokesman said. Police said a woman was wounded Tuesday by Israeli shelling of a village in the western Bekaa region in south-eastern Lebanon. Fadimah Hijazi, 45, was wounded when a rocket landed near her home as Israel shelled the village of Mashghara in the western Bekaa region in southeastern Lebanon.

Monitors condemn Israel, Lebanese guerrillas

TYRE (R) — The group monitoring the Israeli-Lebanese conflict in south Lebanon accused both sides on Tuesday of violating a 1996 ceasefire agreement that bans attacks on civilians. The monitoring group, which has Israeli, Lebanese, Syrian, French and American members, called on both sides to observe the agreement which prohibits firing from civilian areas or targeting civilians. Israel and Lebanese guerrillas were each blamed for four incidents which the group said violated the ceasefire. The violations included the firing of rounds by Israeli troops and "those cooperating with them" which wounded six civilians and caused property damage in the areas of Ain-Etine and Machghara on August 25. The monitoring group also condemned a Katyusha rocket attack into northern Israel by Lebanese guerrillas which took place on the same day. It said 17 civilians were wounded in the rocket barrage which was claimed by Hizbollah.

Iraqi VP visits bombed Sudan plant

KHARTOUM (R) — Iraq's Vice President Taha Yassin Ramadan on Tuesday started a brief trip to Sudan with a visit to a medicine plant which the United States bombed last month. Sudanese state television reported. Ramadan, who arrived in the Sudanese capital Khartoum on Monday, was shown around the demolished factory by Sudan's Minister of Health Mahdi Bobo Nimir. Ramadan said when asked to comment on the missile attack that Iraq's stand on American "hegemony" was well-known. Ramadan is due to travel from Sudan to South Africa to attend the 12th summit of the Non-Aligned Movement, which starts on Wednesday.

Iran protests Iraq's support for Mujahadeen

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran has lodged a protest with the United Nations over Iraq's support for the People's Mujahadeen after the Iraq-based rebel group claimed responsibility for the murder of a former prison chief. In a letter to U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan, Iran's U.N. ambassador, Hadi Nejad Hussein, said his country "holds Iraq accountable" for the Mujahadeen's cross-border raids and "their terrorist" acts against Iranian nationals and the violation of Iran's territorial integrity. "The official Iranian news agency IRNA reported Tuesday: 'The Islamic Republic also protests the Iraqi government's assisting and sheltering the terrorists and facilitating their operations beyond our borders,' he said. Nejad Hussein noted the assassination on August 23 of former prison chief Assadollah Lajevardi by two Mujahadeen rebels. Two other people were also killed in the operation claimed by the rebel group.

Israel considers Palestinian's appeal of longest detention

TEL AVIV (AFP) — The

Israeli Supreme Court will consider Tuesday the appeal of a Palestinian who has been held in administrative detention for a record of five years.

Osama Barham, 36, of the West Bank village of Ramim, was arrested in 1993 after Israeli military authorities suspected him of being a key member in a Palestinian Islamist group. He has been held without trial since then. Barham says he was imprisoned on the basis of secret reports from Shin Bet, Israel's domestic security service.

His Israeli lawyer said he

has not been allowed to summon defence witnesses and that so far no court has established his guilt.

The military authorities can hold a suspect in administrative detention for six-month periods which are renewable indefinitely.

But the law says that "there must be reasonable grounds for the detention, to ensure public security or that of a defined geographical area."

Barham, a former journalism student at the Islamic College in Hebron, earlier served seven years in Israeli prisons following a 1985 conviction for illegal weapons possession.

Iran vows to fight U.S. radio station

TEHRAN (AFP) — Tehran vowed Tuesday to fight a U.S. plan to establish a government radio station broadcasting into Iran from the Czech Republic.

The proposed station, which was due to begin broadcasting Tuesday but has been delayed for several weeks, "amounts to blatant interference in our internal affairs and is in no way acceptable," foreign ministry spokesman Mahmoud Mohammadi said.

"Iran is closely watching the plan to set up the service and its

programming contents and will do all it can to block this anti-Iranian move," he said, quoted by newspapers.

Mohammadi said Foreign Minister Karam Khanzari had issued instructions to Iranian diplomats abroad to explore ways to undercut the service, "which is against international law and norms."

Last week Iran said the proposed station was a "terrorist action by the U.S. government" and asked Czech authorities to block its establishment.

The Czech cabinet late Wednesday gave permission for the radio-language service to start broadcasting from the station's Prague headquarters.

Czech Foreign Secretary Jan Kavan sought to give assurance that the radio's programmes would be balanced in content and not "unfriendly" towards Tehran.

But Czech President Vaclav Havel has called for the station to be given total freedom in its programming and not to be placed under any kind of surveillance by Czech authorities.

The station, to be administered under the aegis of the United States Information Agency (USIA), will be run by Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, a non-profit organisation funded by the U.S. Congress.

Congress has earmarked \$4 million to launch of the service, according to the Czech press. The USIA also plans to create a similar service to broadcast into Iraq, although the Czech government has not yet approved the plan.

Iranian MP favours 'moderate' approach to U.S.

TEHRAN (AFP) — A conservative Iranian MP called Tuesday for the adoption of a moderate attitude towards the United States in a bid to help ease tension between the traditional archenemies.

"We must act based on our national interests. Now it's the time to look at relations with America with moderation and see where our interests lie," said Mohammad Javad Larijani, vice president of the Iranian

parliamentary committee on foreign affairs.

Larijani, a moderate conservative, acknowledged that Tehran and Washington "may not reach a conclusion on restoring ties," which were broken in 1980 after Iranian radicals took the staff at the former U.S. embassy here hostage.

"But the right thing to do is to reach a balance in relations with the U.S. government

and be able to understand what kind of a behaviour to adopt in various aspects," he told the English-language daily Iran News.

"The Americans have apparently revised their past behaviour towards Iran. If this revision leads to a tempering of their past hostile stand against us, then a new state of relations free of tension can take shape," he added. "Otherwise exchanges will be limited to nice words."

Oil output from Yemeni field stopped by strike

SANAA (R) — Oil output at Yemen's 170,000 barrels per day (bpd) Marib oilfields has stopped because of a labour strike, an oil ministry official said Tuesday.

"The oil ministry confirms that production from the Marib oilfields has stopped," the official from the oil and mineral resources ministry told Reuters.

Marib is operated by U.S. Hunt Oil and Exxon Corp.

More than 1,000 Yemeni oil workers went on strike Tuesday in a labour dispute with Hunt over health benefits, the Refinery and Oil Fields General Labour Union said in a statement.

"The strike is comprehensive including oil production fields, the oil refinery and the gas production unit," said one labour official.

The oil ministry in Sanaa refused to comment on reports

that the main export pipeline from Marib had been damaged by an explosion last week.

Yemen produces around 390,000 bpd of crude, the main source of government revenues for the poor Arab country.

One oil ministry official said that the strike could harm the country's economy, already suffering from ailing world crude prices.

"The timing of the strike is not convenient in view of the fall in world prices and the scheduled conference on gas and oil in Yemen at the end of this month," one ministry official said.

But the union, in another statement Tuesday, called for the strike to continue until all its demands were met, including the release of four senior union officials, who the union said were arrested Monday night for calling the strike.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 4773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

15:10 "The Adventures of Teddy Ruxpin"
15:30 Children's Programme — Halfway to Cross the Galaxy and Turn Left
16:00 "The Album Show"
17:00 "Doc. — Ushuaia"
18:15 "Sea Quest (Ep.11)"
19:00 "Le Journal"
19:15 Science Magazine — E-M6
19:30 "News headlines"
19:35 "Comedy — Keeping Mum"
20:00 "Doc. — Envoy Special Magazine"
20:30 "Computer Chronicles"
21:10 "Kung Fu"
22:00 "News in English"
22:30 "Chicago Hope"
23:59 "Drama — Bugs (Ep.4)"
01:00 "End of T.X."

PRAYER TIMES

04:46Fajr
06:06(Sunrise)Dhuhr
12:35Dhuhr
16:11Asr
19:05Maghreb
20:25Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swefieh, Tel. 5920740
Assemblies of God Church Tel. 4632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 4624590
Terra Sancta Church Tel. 4622366

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Anglican Church Tel. 4624653/4624811
St. Alfred Syrian Orthodox Church Tel. 4771751
Amman International Church Tel. 5865897
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 5688404
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 5811295
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints Tel. 4654932
St. John the Baptist at De la Salle College Tel. 5661757
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 4637440
Greek Orthodox Church Tel. 4646138
Church of Presentation, Swefieh Tel. 5920146
The United Catholic Church Tel. 4624757
The English-Language Catholic Parish Tel. 4614190
Evangelical Free Church Tel. 4892679
The Baptist Church Tel. 4628052
The Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 4771331
The Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 4775261

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology
Temperatures will continue to dip becoming around average with winds northwesterly active. In Aqaba, it will be hot,

winds northerly moderate, and seas calm.
Amman20/32
Aqaba26/39
Deserts21/35
Jordan Valley25/38
Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 34, Aqaba 41 Humidity readings: Amman 24 per cent, Aqaba 28 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Dr. Mazen Nhalil5350435
Dr. Abdul Majid Sba'ir391405
Dr. Khalid M'addi5661144
Dr. Adnan Zaghloul4898140
Firas pharmacy5661912
Al Asema pharmacy4657055
Al Salam pharmacy4636730
Yacoub pharmacy4644945
Shmeisani pharmacy4637660
Nairoukh pharmacy4623672
Najib pharmacy5347632
IRBID:
Dr. Ali Shouqairi7100069

Al Quds pharmacy(—) 5921199
ZARQA:
Dr. Walid Halaseh982799
Khalfieh pharmacy985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre4637111
Civil Defence Department 5661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue4630341
Civil Defence Emergency199
Rescue Police 192 4621111 4637777
Fire Brigade4671011
Blood Bank4775121
Highway Police5343402
Traffic Police4896390
Public Security Dept.4630321
Hotel Complaints5605800
Price Complaints5661176
Water & Sewerage Complaints497467
Amman Municipality Complaints4787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance)121
Overseas Calls010230
Central Amman Telephone Repairs4623101
Abdali Tel. Repairs5661101
Jordan Television4773111
Radio Jordan4774111
Water Authority5680100
J. Electricity Authority 5815615
Electric Power Co.4636381
RJ Flight Information 44-53200
Queen Alia Int. Airport44-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
The Arab Centre for Heart and Spec

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (44)53200 where it should always be verified. Information on other flights are supplied on phone 44 (52700) or 4453250.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ)
Flights
07:30Damascus (RJ)
09:15Muscat (add) (RJ)
09:30Jeddah (RJ)
09:45Larnaca (RJ)
10:15Muscat (add) (RJ)
10:20Doha, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
10:45Doha, Bahrain (RJ)
17:30Madrid (RJ)
18:05Istanbul (RJ)
18:40Brussels, Geneva (RJ)
19:10London, Vienna (RJ)
19:25Frankfurt, Berlin (RJ)
19:25Paris, Bilbao (RJ)
19:25New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
19:30Dubai (add) (RJ)
20:00Rome (RJ)
20:45Tunis (add) (RJ)
23:20Beirut (RJ)
01:05Cairo (RJ)
02:35Riyadh (add) (RJ)

Other Flights

06:35Larnaca (CY)
07:30Paris (AF)
09:00Riyadh (add) (SV)
09:20London (BA)
11:30Ta'iz, Sanaa (YV)
12:45Kuwait (KU)
13:20Bahrain (add) (GF)
14:00Jeddah (SV)
14:15Cairo (MS)
15:00Bahrain, Muscat (GF)
15:10Tunis (TU)
15:20Vienna (OS)
17:20Sharjah (AH)
17:20Dubai (EK)
20:00Beirut (ME)
20:30Abu Dhabi, Karachi (PK)
23:55Beirut (ME)
00:40Damascus, Amsterdam (KL)
03:45Beirut, Athens (OA)

DEPARTURES

06:30Larnaca (RJ)
11:45Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
12:30Rome (RJ)
12:30Tunis (add) (RJ)
12:30Dubai (add) (RJ)
12:45Istanbul (RJ)
13:25London (RJ)
20:00Beirut (RJ)
20:45Columbo (RJ)

Other Flights

06:35Larnaca (CY)
07:30Paris (AF)
09:00Riyadh (add) (SV)
09:20London (BA)
11:30Ta'iz, Sanaa (YV)
12:45Kuwait (KU)
13:20Bahrain (add) (GF)
14:00Jeddah (SV)
14:15Cairo (MS)
15:00Bahrain, Muscat (GF)
15:10Tunis (TU)
15:20Vienna (OS)
17:20Sharjah (AH)
17:20Dubai (EK)
20:00Beirut (ME)
20:30Abu Dhabi, Karachi (PK)
23:55Beirut (ME)
00:40Damascus, Amsterdam (KL)
03:45Beirut, Athens (OA)

DEPARTURES

06:30Larnaca (RJ)
11:45Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
12:30Rome (RJ)
12:30Tunis (add) (RJ)
12:30Dubai (add) (RJ)
12:45Istanbul (RJ)
13:25London (RJ)
20:00Beirut (RJ)
20:45Columbo (RJ)

WHAT'S GOING ON

DAR AL FUNUN SUMMER 98 FESTIVAL

EXHIBITIONS

CONCERT



PRINCE ABDULLAH MEETS WITH PRIME MINISTER: HRH Prince Abdullah Tuesday congratulates Prime Minister Fayez Tarawneh on his recent appointment as prime minister, wishing him and his Cabinet every success in implementing the Royal directives and guidelines contained in the letter of designation (Petra photo)

Seven board members from writers' group resign over 'differences with president'

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Seven of the nine Jordan Writers Association board members have submitted their resignations to JWA President Hani Kheir in protest against what they describe as disharmony among board members, the board's failure to convene regular meetings to discuss cultural activities and an unacceptable attitude on the part of the JWA president.

Those who resigned were Rihad Khatib, Mamoun Sarhan, Ahmad Jabbar, Akram Abul Ragheeb, Nadiya Aloul, Khaled Obeidat and Mustafa Khreisat. "Khatib told the Jordan Times that she will not withdraw her resignation without a 'drastic change in the attitude' of Kheir."

Khatib said Kheir mismanaged JWA funds, dispensed with the association's property without the knowledge of the elected nine-member board and appointed employees without the board's approval.

She added that at the time of the election of the board at the JWA's general assembly meeting in January, the JWA fund stood at JD4,000 collected from membership fees plus JD6,000 from an annual

subsidy provided by the Ministry of Culture.

The funds have either unaccountably disappeared or were dispensed without the board's authorisation, Khatib charged.

On administrative matters, Khatib said the JWA board has co-opted only four times over the past seven months. She added that personal disputes surfaced at each meeting over board positions, despite an agreement on the matter at the January meeting.

Because of the disputes, she continued, Kheir repeatedly adjourned meetings, rendering the board ineffective and unable to meet the goals of the 178-member general assembly that elected it.

According to Khatib, the JWA president's office remains closed in the face of visiting writers, the premises are unkempt and the board members show indifference to the situation, circumstances which she said reflect badly on the association's reputation.

Another member who resigned, Nadiya Aloul, echoed Khatib's views concerning the failure by the board members to agree on a single programme and the failure of the president to ease friction among the

board members. But she said she knew nothing about the alleged fund mismanagement.

Aloul, however, added that she suspended her resignation for one month following a discussion with Kheir, who she said pledged to bring matters under control.

Aloul said she also wanted the JWA to resume its cultural activities, which include weekly lectures.

Kheir, who could not be reached for comment, was quoted by a report in the Arabic daily Al-Dustour as saying that no collective decisions were taken by the board and that he had to make decisions himself because the board members were "in constant disagreement practically about everything."

On the JWA's funds, Kheir said half of the Ministry of Culture's JD6,000 subsidy is spent on rent, while the rest is barely sufficient to cover the association's expenses.

As to cultural activities, he said they seldom attracted the public's attention, despite the board's efforts.

But Kheir said he was doubling his efforts to settle the disputes among the board members to allow the JWA to offer its programmes to the public.

New press law goes into effect Journalists voice hope 'Royal Commission' will serve as neutral investigatory authority

By Amy Henderson
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The controversial 1998 Press and Publications Law went into effect yesterday as hesitant journalists and editors voiced hope that a proposed Royal Commission for the Press would ameliorate the effects of the severe legislation.

"The suggestion of the commission is a positive sign that there still exists an official willingness to soften the impact of the law," said Nabil Sherif, chief editor of Al-Dustour Arabic daily newspaper. "It appears that this Commission, or whatever body springs from it, would transfer power to a neutral authority to evaluate conflicts."

HRH Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, recently suggested the formation of a Royal Commission for the Press to deal with press-related issues.

Members of the Senate had also recommended the establishment of a "higher body" to set rules and regulate standards for journalists when they endorsed the law last month.

Information Minister Nasser Judeh yesterday elaborated on the commission's role, saying that it "will study the manners [related to the press and the

press law] and then advise on a possible body in the future that will set rules, regulations and standards for journalists."

"The commission will present recommendations in a manner similar to that of the commission appointed to study the subject of the National Charter," said Mr. Judeh. "The commission will not be an end in itself, it will be established to study proposals and present recommendations. In this case, unlike [that of the National Charter, the Commission will recommend the establishment of the body that will ultimately be a point of reference."

The new press and publications law, packed with language susceptible to liberal interpretation and daunting financial penalties, includes, for the first time, a "legal" mechanism to close down newspapers found in violation of the law.

The legislation is the consequence of a long-standing war between some newspapers, which argue they are harassed by the executive for their provocative coverage of news, and the executive, which claims that an "irresponsible" press has damaged valuable ties with neighbouring Arab

states. The press asserts that the new law, drafted by a hostile government, is a "penal code" for journalists, while the government made no apologies for it.

Both sides, it seems, now hope that the product of a Royal Commission will ease tensions on both sides.

When Prime Minister Fayez Tarawneh and his team assumed executive authority, Judeh was quick to assure journalists that, although the law, having passed through Constitutional channels could not be reversed, the government was in favour of a "soft implementation" of the law and was seeking a mechanism to calm tempers on both sides of the fence.

During yesterday's weekly press briefing, Judeh told journalists that the Commission would be "all encompassing and above the little differences in opinion and orientation."

"This is [going to be] a Royal Commission," he said. "The emphasis is on the word 'royal.' Otherwise, it would be any other ordinary commission. It will be topical and comprise members who are specialised and who represent the [pluralistic ideals] required in this case."

The press corps' interpretation of the Royal Commission is that a body sprung from the commission would act as an "ombudsman" to receive and investigate complaints from parties offended by the press or members of the press who feel targeted by other parties. "Ideally, I think we would like to see a 'higher council' that would agree on a method of reprimanding journalists who violate an ethics code drafted by the council," says Sherif.

A code of ethics is embodied in the law of the Jordan Press Association, but historically, the association has had difficulty in enforcing the code, in spite of the JPA council's occasional urgings to "unruly" papers to "tone things down."

The outcome of a Royal Commission, says Sherif, could be the missing link in a system of checks and balances for the press, and many concerned parties hope that a new "regulatory" body will help avoid the "anarchy" of going to court.

"This is a very good idea," says former Information Minister Ibrahim Izzedine. "Ideally, what we hope is that journalists will be protected from the mood of whoever feels offended while giving offend-

ed parties a chance to register complaints."

"A council or committee would be a good step towards forgetting that we are stuck for the time being with this law," says Hani Hourani, director of Al-Urdan Al-Jadid Research Centre.

Hourani, along with heads of several other research centres, asserts that the new law threatens their very existence with restrictions on their sources of funding as well as restrictions on their publications, which must now pass through the Department of Press and Publications before going to print.

"We hope that an enlightened body would recognise the needs of research centres as well as the press," he told the Jordan Times. "Most people would prefer to deal with a council, or whatever it will be, than solely with the department of press and publications. Maybe in the end it will lead us to devise a more democratic law."

Judeh said that the government had only "vague outlines" on the shape of the commission, but said yesterday afternoon he expected the Cabinet to discuss it at a session scheduled for last night.

Communist party chief threatens legal action against breakaway faction

By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A schism in the Jordan Communist Party (JCP) has deepened with two factions accusing each other of 'being responsible for the split among the members of the Kingdom's oldest party.'

At a press conference yesterday, JCP Secretary General Munir Hamamneh accused former party chief Yaqoub Zayadine of spurring the dissension and threatened legal action if he conducted activities under the party's name.

Last Friday, Zayadine held an extraordinary session of JCP members, who at the session elected a new leadership. After the session, Zayadine's followers claimed that they alone represented communists in Jordan.

In response, Hamamneh's supporters expelled 11 members of the other group, including Zayadine himself, from the party. They had refused to attend the extraordinary ses-

sion and rejected its outcome, insisting that they were the legitimate leadership of the party.

At the press conference, Hamamneh accused Zayadine of "fraud," saying that many of those who attended Friday's session were not JCP members.

He said that of the 100 persons who attended, 35 were not members of the party. Hamamneh dismissed accusations by Zayadine of receiving funds from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) as "baseless."

Members of Hamamneh's group said the JCP had benefited from "workshops and seminars" designed to help women candidates in last year's parliamentary elections.

"We made use of these workshops financed by a Canadian fund, but none of our comrades received financial assistance from foreign agencies," Emily Nafsa, a Hamamneh supporter, told

reporters at the press conference.

Hamamneh said he met with Interior Minister Nayef Qadi and protested to him for allowing Zayadine to hold the extraordinary session.

"Their meeting was illegal and against the Political Parties Law, which bans the existence of two parties that hold the same name," he added.

"We tried everything possible to convince Zayadine not to go ahead with his plan, but he did not listen and insisted on holding the extraordinary session," Hamamneh said.

"Zayadine sought power to dominate the party and to dictate his agenda to us, an agenda we have rejected," the communist chief said.

Hamamneh warned that if the other faction undertakes any activities under the JCP's name, "we will go to court and sue them because this will be an infringement of the Political Parties Law."

Zayadine, who led the party for the past 40 years, mostly

before the legalisation of political parties in 1992, declined to nominate himself for president in the JCP's elections held earlier this year. Following the elections, he accused some members of the party of receiving "funds" from foreign agencies and maintaining "suspicious" ties with them.

"Some party members were receiving funds from foreign agencies, including USAID. We tried to get rid of the suspicious elements, but we did not succeed," Zayadine said.

"We have documents that prove our claims and we will make them public at the proper time," he added. "We have put an end to the corrupt elements in the party and decided to get rid of them," Zayadine told the Jordan Times.

He said he and his supporters have contacted former Interior Minister Nafith Rashid, "who promised to recognise us as the legitimate representatives of the communists in Jordan and allow us to hold our conference."

Zai plant capacity varying by up to 30% — minister

AMMAN (J.T.) — The government on Tuesday said the daily amount of water pumped through the Zai Water Treatment Plant (ZWP) to western Amman varies from 70 to 100 per cent of the plant's capacity.

Information Minister Nasser Judeh said the variation depends on the results of regular tests aimed at ensuring that water leaving the plant is of good quality. Judeh said Water and Energy Minister Hani Mulki will brief the press as soon as possible on the water situation.

Last week, Mulki said he hoped that the plant would this week resume pumping water supplies to the capital.

He urged residents of western Amman, hit hardest by the eight-week water crisis, to ration consumption after the plant last week began increasing quantities of water supplied to their areas.

Before the water crisis, the ZWP used to pump around 120,000 cubic metres of water per hour, supplying around 40 per cent of Amman's water needs.

WHAT'S GOING ON

DARAT AL-FUNUN SUMMER 98 FESTIVAL

"Summer 98" cultural activities at Darat Al-Funun, Jabal Weibdeh, to last until Sept. 30, include:

EXHIBITIONS

* 50 years of graphic art from Lebanon and works by Jordanian artist Sahel Hajar at the Main House.

* Works by Iraqi artist Samer Usama and by Jordanian artist Said Hadadin at the Blue House.

* Installation works by Jordanian artist Samia Zaru at the Byzantine Church.

* Exhibition of photographs "Memory of a Place" by Jordanian artist Hussein Da'seb at the Museum.

CONCERT

* Concert by the National Band of Circassian Folklore at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m. (daily until Sept. 4).

EXHIBITIONS

* Paintings by Rula Shukairy at the French Cultural Centre, Jabal Amman, until Sept. 30.

* Exhibition of wrought iron furniture by Jordanian artist Salim Al-Bandak at Al-Baidar Hall, Kan Zaman village (Tel. 5862531), until Sept. 17.

Local theatrical team to perform at Cairo festival

AMMAN (J.T.) — A 15-member delegation representing the Ministry of Culture, the Greater Amman Municipality and the "Memory of Three Boxes" theatrical group left Amman for Cairo Monday to take part in the 10th Cairo International Festival for Experimental Theatre, which opened at the Egyptian Opera House yesterday, a Municipality statement said.

"The Memory of Three Boxes" was first performed at the Amman Theatre Days Festival last March and has been chosen by the Ministry of Culture to represent Jordan at the Cairo event. A Greater Amman

municipality production, the play was jointly written by Haya Hussein and Sawwan Darwazeh and directed by the latter, in collaboration with a professional cast including Najwa Kandakji, Muhsin Aref and Zuhair Hassan, the statement added.

The play presents three cohabitants struggling to come to terms with a bitter reality while their force of life is waning. The woman, the only active and working figure among the three, does not only help them escape the agonies of an overbearing memory but also to come to terms with change, according to the statement.

Iran's elite forces begin manoeuvres

(Continued from page 1)

border," he said.

Iran is particularly angry over the continuing captivity of 11 Iranian diplomats and other nationals allegedly seized by the militia after its takeover on August 8 of Mazari-Sharif, a city in northern Afghanistan which was previously controlled by Iranian-backed Afghan opposition forces.

Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Mahmoud Mohammadi issued a stern warning to Taliban leaders Monday over their "contradictory" statements on the diplomats.

"Iran holds the Taliban responsible for the safety of the diplomats and demands their immediate and unconditional release," he said,

quoted by IRNA. "We cannot stand contradictory and ambiguous remarks from the Taliban."

IRNA said Monday that the Taliban had admitted holding 10 diplomats and an IRNA correspondent near Kandahar, a Taliban stronghold in eastern Afghanistan.

It said Mullah Hassan Ghalechi, a Taliban official thought to be close to Taliban leader Mohammad Omar, had pledged that the militia would shortly release the men in a "good-will gesture."

But in an interview with the BBC on the same day, Omar said the Taliban had no knowledge of the diplomats' whereabouts.

The Iranian spokesman said Omar's remarks "are in contradiction to what Pak-

istan has conveyed to us on behalf of the Taliban."

Tehran has put pressure on Islamabad, a powerbroker in Afghanistan with friendly ties to the militia, to intervene to get the diplomats freed, but Pakistan says there is a limit to what it can deliver in Afghanistan.

The commander of Iran's Revolutionary Guards, Rahim Safavi, implicitly criticised Pakistan's role in war-torn Afghanistan, accusing Islamabad of "preferring its short-term interests to long-term interests."

"We cannot stand foreign meddling in a neighbouring country because it jeopardises stability. We urge them to stop interfering," he said in a speech before the manoeuvres began.

Qoureira: Contacts with Israel continue, but no agreement yet

(Continued from page 1)

reserves. They also want Palestinian police to be able to operate in those areas.

The Palestinians also demand that Israel respond to all elements of the U.S. initiative, including a requirement that Israel carry out an additional pull-back as it promised in an earlier U.S.-sponsored agreement.

Israel says that withdrawal could be discussed at a later time, but has made no reference to how the scope should be determined. The United States proposed that the next withdrawal be discussed by an Israeli-Palestinian committee.

In a sign of some U.S. involvement, CIA officials met recently with Arafat's security chiefs in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, Jihir Rajoub and Mohammad Dahlan, to review understandings about security cooperation and the Palestinians' war against terrorism that were worked out in December.

The understandings — negotiated at the time by Israeli, Palestinian and U.S. security officials — specify, for example, that the United States would have a say in whether Islamists could be released from Palestinian jails.

The understandings were never put into practice because Netanyahu refused to approve them, arguing at the time that Israel should have a bigger role in monitoring Palestinian compliance.

Rajoub said Tuesday that the Palestinians would not agree to changes in the document. "It stands as it is," he said.

Meanwhile Netanyahu said Tuesday that the Palestinians had pulled back from the brink of an agreement on the long-delayed Israeli withdrawal from more of the West Bank.

In a speech in Tel Aviv, the right-wing Israeli leader

put the blame squarely on Arafat for the failure to conclude a deal on the transfer of an additional 13 per cent of the West Bank to Palestinian self-rule.

"We were very close... relatively close to moving on the negotiations with the Palestinians a few days ago," Netanyahu told an international audience of politicians and academics at a conference that has been held jointly in Israel and Jordan.

He added: "There has been a retreat on the Palestinian side and I think it is important that the Palestinians come back to the table."

Showdown expected as Hun Sen declared winner

PHNOM PENH (AFP) — Election authorities Tuesday officially declared the Cambodian People's Party (CPP) of strongman Hun Sen the winner of July elections, setting the stage for a showdown with the opposition which rejects the results.

The National Election Committee announced the final official returns a day after hundreds of opposition claims of fraud and irregularities were categorically dismissed by the country's highest appeals body.

The results showed the CPP, the de facto ruling party, with 2.03 million votes, just over 41 per cent of the 4.9 million ballots cast and equivalent to 64 of the 122 seats in parliament. The royalist FUNCINPEC party of Prince Norodom Ranariddh, who was deposed as first prime minister by Hun Sen in July 1997, finished second with 1.55 million votes — about 32 per cent of the total and equivalent to 43 parliamentary seats.

Sam Rainsy's self-named party came third with nearly 700,000 votes, about 14 per cent of the total or 15 seats in the National Assembly.

The remaining votes were split between 36 smaller parties which competed in the July 26 election, none of which won enough votes for any seats. Prince Ranariddh and Sam Rainsy have been leading an unprecedented week-long sit-in protest against the polls and against Hun Sen, the powerful second prime

minister. They have refused to accept the results, claiming that election officials biased towards the CPP ignored their complaints. In separate statements, the two parties blasted the rejection of their complaints and said they had been denied due process.

"The refusal of both the National Election Committee and the Constitutional Council to give the FUNCINPEC party due process leaves the latter little choice but to pursue it by other means," the royalists said in a statement which did not directly address the final result announcement.

Sam Rainsy decried the vote announcement as a "perversion of the will of the Cambodian people" and said his party would continue struggling against a process that "has failed to meet legal and democratic standards from start to finish."

"There is no reason to believe that the results announced today reflect the will of the Cambodian people," he said. "We will not betray the people."

He also urged the international community to take measures to help reorganise elections.

But most of the international community including a U.N.-coordinated team of foreign observers, has said the election was free and fair.

Several countries have urged the opposition to accept the results and move

on. The opposition has angrily resisted those calls and has vowed to block the formation of a coalition, necessary because the CPP lacks the two-thirds of seats constitutionally needed to form a government on its own. Opposition parties have several times refused offers to negotiate a coalition with the CPP.

Should they hold firm, a constitutional crisis is virtually inevitable with no party able to form a government. "We will not recognise the results of any election without our complaints being dealt with in a proper manner," Sam Rainsy said Tuesday at the ongoing protest in a park in front of parliament dubbed "Democracy Square."

Tens of thousands have attended the demonstration since it began last week, demanding the complaints be addressed and that Hun Sen resign. Chief among the opposition's complaints is that the mathematical formula for allocating parliamentary seats was illegally changed before the election. Under the original formula, the opposition would have had a slim majority in parliament with the same election results.

Election officials, who insist the change was done properly before the election, refused to consider the complaint. They also denied numerous opposition requests for recounts, saying that a small number they conducted shortly after the election revealed no major discrepancies.



U.S. First Lady Hillary Clinton (left) watches a worker during her visit to a small clothing factory in Moscow. Hillary Clinton is accompanying her husband Bill Clinton on his two-day visit to Russia (Reuters photo)

Hillary Clinton says she is fine after scandal

MOSCOW (R) — Hillary Clinton said Tuesday she has been coping well since her husband, U.S. President Bill Clinton, confessed on nationwide television to an adulterous relationship.

"I've been getting along fine," Hillary Clinton said when asked in Moscow about the last few weeks since her husband admitted he had an "inappropriate" relationship with former White House intern Monica Lewinsky, now 25.

The Clintons left for vacation two weeks ago after his testimony on the Lewinsky matter to a grand jury and after he had told the nation about it that evening, reversing his previous angry denials.

She has not spoken in public about her reaction before, although a spokesman has said she still loves her husband. The White House has said the family had to undergo a healing process during their vacation.

Hillary Clinton toured a

small clothing factory with President Boris Yeltsin's wife Naina after arriving in Moscow early Tuesday morning and met several Russian officials and women who own small businesses.

She was poised and smiled frequently, although she appeared tired after the long overnight flight from Washington with her husband, in town for a two-day summit with President Yeltsin.

In the factory employing mostly women, workers expressed sympathy for the president's wife after she was embarrassed by the public disclosure of Clinton's indiscretion.

"On a human scale I feel sorry for her," said Tonya Salkina, who runs fabrics for the small plant's production floor. "She's a woman above everything else, not just the president's wife. As with any family, they have to deal with it themselves."

Tatyana Nedzvetzskaya, the owner of the Quoll plant

who showed Hillary Clinton around, said she felt sympathy for her and distaste for the investigation that brought Lewinsky, the stained dress and other sordid details to public attention.

"Why shouldn't she feel fine? The nation is guilty for poking into her business," she said after the first lady left.

"If you raise up the sheets of every person, then you'd have a fascist government."

"If the Americans don't like him, we'll be glad to take him here," she said, alluding to widespread Russian discontent with President Yeltsin as the economic situation has sharply worsened in recent weeks.

Hillary Clinton later toured Moscow's main Tretyakov Art Gallery with Naina Yeltsin and then joined her husband for his afternoon programme, which included a visit to a Moscow school at the start of the academic year and a Kremlin state dinner.

New AIDS strain could be missed by screening

PARIS (AFP) — French researchers have identified a new strain of the AIDS virus in a woman from Cameroon which may not be detectable in routine screening, reported the monthly journal Nature Medicine Tuesday.

The report raises fears that the new strain, which is similar to that afflicting chimpanzees, could escape detection in routine tests for Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) which cause Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS).

"Until now, this new variant has only been found in one case, in blood samples

from a 40-year-old woman from Cameroon, who died from AIDS in 1995," said an author of the report, the Paris-based virus expert Francois Simon.

The woman had never left Cameroon and the origin of the infection was not known, said the report.

But the researchers do not seem unduly panicked by the discovery of the new variant, which according to Simon is "no more or less virulent than other (strains), and its incidence is extremely rare."

In an editorial accompanying the report, expert in molecular retroviruses Simon

Wain-Hobson said it was "difficult to imagine" that the new variant would pose a great threat given the strength of strains already prevalent.

"This discovery reinforces the theory that there is no barrier preventing the virus from crossing between species," Simon told AFP.

A wider study is under way in Cameroon and neighbouring Gabon to determine how far this new strain has spread, said Simon.

The report noted that despite the high number of AIDS virus strains in Cameroon and Gabon, actual incidence of HIV infection in both countries remained relatively low.

'Mother Teresa's sainthood must wait'

VATICAN CITY (AFP) — While many may already think of Mother Teresa as a saint, any official canonisation will have to wait, under Vatican rules that require a five-year interval after a candidate's death.

With the first anniversary of her death at age 87 on Sept. 5 last year, tributes to the diminutive yet media savvy nun who catered to Calcutta's poorest of the poor have again brought the question to the Vatican.

Even a person like Mother Teresa, whose selfless devotion to the downtrodden and oppressed helped win her the 1979 Nobel peace prize, cannot justify speeding up the process, said a Vatican spokesman.

"All candidates for sanctification are equal before God," he said. The rules require a five-year wait before the path towards sainthood is started. After her death, many voices

within the Roman Catholic Church tried to push for an exception in Mother Teresa's case and urged her immediate canonisation. Among them was her close friend Italian Cardinal Pio Laghi, now 76, who argued that Mother Teresa had "done what Jesus did 2,000 years ago".

In Rome, however, members of her Missionaries of Charity, a community of 2,500 nuns around the world who minister to the poor, sick and abandoned, uphold Vatican rules and have not pressed for any early start to the canonisation procedure.

Though Pope John Paul II simplified the process in 1983, the path towards sainthood is still a long one.

It starts with the local bishop in the diocese where the candidate lived, who must conduct a full enquiry into the acts, writings, and possible martyrdom of an individual whose "reputation for holiness" has been brought to the attention of religious authorities.

In the case of Mother Teresa, this would fall to the Calcutta diocese to collect evidence of what the church refers to as the "heroic virtue" of the candidate, meaning their practice of the Christian virtues of faith, hope and charity to an outstanding degree.

Should this initial enquiry prove worthy in the bishop's eyes, the file will be transferred to a special Vatican committee for a second look to see if it is deemed worthy enough to send on the Pope, who makes the final decision.

In his 20 years as Pontiff, John Paul II has broken church records for pronouncing the most number of beatifications — a first formal step on the road to sainthood — and actual canonisations. By August, he has beatified 803 people and canonised 279 saints.

NEWS IN BRIEF

French police detain 11 in ETA-related swoop

BAYONNE, France (AFP) — French police Tuesday detained 11 people, the majority of them Spaniards, suspected of backing the armed Basque separatist group ETA. In early morning raids in Arbonne, Biarritz and Hendaye, members of the anti-terrorist squad and the border police picked up the 11, believed to be known Basque separatist sympathisers aged in their 40s. Among those arrested judicial sources named Jose-Mari and Enrique Fagoaga, brothers of an ETA leader expelled from France in the 1980s, as well as Isabel Aristu-Munoz, Begonia Jauregui Erasti and Guillermo and Ramon Echeverria. ETA separatists launched an armed struggle for an independent Basque homeland 30 years ago that has resulted in roughly 1,000 deaths. The organisation has traditionally sought shelter and support on the French side of the Basque country. Last week, the Spanish daily El Mundo quoted police sources as saying that ETA's top military, political and logistics chiefs had moved to Belgium due to mounting pressure against the group from French authorities. In recent months, ETA's political branch Herri Batasuna has reportedly been exploring the possibility of a peace process similar to that in Northern Ireland.

Chinese court upholds spying verdict against Taiwan businessmen

BEIJING (AP) — A Chinese court Tuesday rejected a Taiwanese businessman's appeal against a four-year prison sentence for spying, the official Xinhua News Agency reported. The Beijing Municipal Higher People's Court agreed with a lower court that Kou Chien-Ming and three other Taiwanese businessmen were collecting political, economic and military information for Taiwanese intelligence. Xinhua said, "Their espionage activities all seriously endangered China's state security," the court said. The three other businessmen — Chen Shao-Yu, Han Yue-Ting and Chou Chang-Ming — were also convicted on Aug. 12 of espionage but were exempted from criminal punishment. Only Kou, Han and Chou appealed the original ruling. Xinhua said, Taiwan's intelligence agencies and the men's families have strongly denied the men were spies. Kou's wife, Chang Wen-Chi, said his sentencing may have resulted from differences between what constitutes classified information in Taiwan and China. The four were detained earlier this year while in China on what their families said were business trips. China announced their arrests May 28, claiming the men confessed to spying for Taiwan.

Couple gets a deal at fancy hotel

DELRAY BEACH, Florida (AP) — It was May 1948 when George Selby took his bride, Ruth, to the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York for a two-day honeymoon. They wanted to go back this summer for their anniversary, but times — and prices — have changed. While their room 50 years ago cost \$15 per night, Selby was told that the cheapest accommodations now would cost \$435. When she mentioned the honeymoon, the hotel operator put her on hold. "She came back and said, 'We'd like to have you stay at the \$15-a-night rate if you have the original receipt,'" Selby said. They did. The couple returned to Manhattan last month and stayed seven nights for \$18.75 a night — the 1948 rate plus tax. "It was beautiful and elegant," Selby said. "I wouldn't have known that 50 years had gone by. It was like going back in time."

Couple chased by hurricane finally weds

NORFOLK, Virginia (AP) — For better or worse, Lisa Murray and Michael Ryan were going to get married. It didn't matter that hurricane Bonnie chased them across two states to three different sites. The couple had been planning an oceanfront wedding in Nags Head, North Carolina, for the past year, renting four beach houses for their wedding party and friends. But they had to flee last week as Bonnie approached. They went to Virginia Beach, where Ryan's parents live, and wedding coordinator Jenny Abrigo found a beachfront hotel with an ocean view. Then Bonnie hit, and the room was damaged. Abrigo found still more accommodations. A florist supplied the red roses, stillflowers and wildflowers the bride wanted, and a caterer duplicated the menu planned for Nags Head. Then, Saturday morning, the couple learned that their reception hall had been damaged by water. So the party was moved yet again. Murray and Ryan were finally hitched without a hitch that night. "We said we were going to get you married come hell or high water," the groom's mother, Susan Ryan, said to her son after the ceremony. "And you really did," answered the bride.

Dangerous dogs in Belgium to be registered by Nov. 1

BRUSSELS (AFP) — Thirteen breeds of dog considered dangerous, including pitbull terriers, will have to be registered on a central file in Belgium by Nov. 1. Agriculture Minister Karel Pinxten announced here. All dogs less than four months old of any of the breeds concerned, as well as those changing owners, will have to be identified, either by a computer chip or a tattoo and their details entered onto the file. "Even if some dogs are a danger, it is nothing or little to do with their breed but above all their individual characters, and that of their masters," the minister said. Veterinary surgeons and hospitals are currently drawing up lists of dogs representing a risk. Other measures are being studied to ensure the safety of the general public and force dog owners to take precautions, for example making muzzles obligatory and insurance against the dogs causing damage or injury to third parties.

Homeless throw a party for their helpers

APPLETON, Wisconsin (AP) — When volunteers at a Salvation Army shelter and its residents had a cookout this weekend, dinner was on the homeless. The residents prepared Sunday's meal to honour the people who help them. "We wanted to do something to say thank you for giving us somewhere to stay," said Lee, who gave only his first name. "We're not bad people. We've just had some bad luck. We want to show that." Lee and another shelter resident, Dan, came up with the idea. Some residents chipped in money for food while others cleaned or did other chores. Nearly two dozen volunteers enjoyed a dinner featuring hamburgers, bratwurst, sodas and fried green tomatoes. Capt. William Hogg of the Salvation Army said he wasn't surprised the residents would go to all that trouble. "These people would give you the shirt off their back," he said. "They help us in their own special way." "Recently, someone gave us a \$1,000 donation. It was someone whom we helped get back on his feet when he needed help. He was returning the favour in his own way."

Visiting Burundi strongman blasts sanctions against his country

NAIROBI (AFP) — Visiting Burundian strongman Pierre Buyoya Tuesday complained of the "disastrous effects" of sanctions imposed on his country more than two years ago when he seized power in a bloodless coup. "These sanctions have disastrous effects on people's lives," President Buyoya told a press conference called to introduce the English-language version of his book "Mission Possible."

"Women, children and old people have died because they have been unable to get medicines in time. Burundians have lost their jobs because their company has had to close down because of the embargo; the losses have been enormous for the Burundian state," Buyoya said, estimating these in the "hundreds of millions of dollars."

The Tutsi army major said he planned to raise the issue of the sanctions during the summit of the Non-Aligned Movement

in Durban, South Africa, where he was headed later Tuesday.

"Some countries of the region want to lift the sanctions, but unfortunately not all of them yet," he said, without elaborating.

Nine African countries imposed the sanctions in July 1996, days after Buyoya, a former president, seized power from Hutu President Sylvestre Ntibunganya.

The aim of the embargo was to force Buyoya to negotiate with Hutu rebels, who began a civil war in 1993 after the assassination of the leader to whom he had handed power after elections.

The sanctions were also aimed at having the military leader restore constitutional rule. He has taken steps towards doing so and maintained that his primary goal was to end the rebellion and bloodshed.

Monday, Buyoya met with his Kenyan counterpart Daniel Arap Moi, who acknowledged "progress" towards meeting the con-

ditions for lifting the sanctions, according to the Keoyan News Agency.

Moi said: "The sanctions should be reexamined to relieve the suffering of the Burundian people."

Tanzania and Uganda are the least in favour of lifting the sanctions, despite the opening in June of peace talks in the northern Tanzanian town of Arusha.

Burundi has seen nearly five years of civil war between the Tutsi-dominated army and Hutu rebels that has claimed around 200,000 lives.

Tutsis, who make up just 14 per cent of the population, hold the levers of power, dominating the civil service, armed forces and business. The Hutus, who make up 85 per cent of the population, are mostly peasant farmers.

"Mission Possible" is billed as Buyoya's "profession of faith" in the chances of restoring peace to Burundi.

Congo rebels claim Kabila's home town, say going for Lubumbashi

GOMA, DRC (AFP) — Rebels have seized Manono, the home town of DRC President Laurent Kabila, the rebels' deputy military commander Bob Ngyo said Tuesday.

Major Ngyo, speaking in the rebel stronghold of Goma in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), said Manono fell to the anti-Kabila forces Monday. The town lies in the northeast of the mineral-rich province of Katanga.

"Our next goal is Lubumbashi," Ngyo said, referring to the Katanga capital and the DRC's second city, more than 1,200 kilometres from Kinshasa. "When we have taken Lubumbashi, we'll be at

ease," the deputy leader of the rebels said. Manono had been a symbolic target for the mainly Banyamulenge or ethnic Tutsi forces who rose up against Kabila's regime on Aug. 2.

Ngyo stated that with the seizure of Manono, "almost without any fighting during the course of Monday," the rebels held the northern part of Katanga, after taking Kalemie and Moba towns on the shore of Lake Tanganyika.

An AFP correspondent in Kalemie attested to their control of that town Monday.

With regard to Manono, Ngyo said: "It's normal there was no resistance. Kabila has dispersed his father and his brothers,

dressing them up in uniforms. Who do you expect to see defending Manono?"

The rebels have been active in the east of the vast, impoverished nation spread across central Africa following a week of setbacks around Kinshasa and the region to the southwest of the capital.

Kabila has re-established his hold over that territory with strong backing from Angolan and Zimbabwean forces, claiming to have defeated invasion troops in southwestern DRC sent by Rwanda and Uganda.

Goma lies close to the borders with these neighbouring countries, which both deny Kinshasa's assertions that they are seeking to set up a "Tutsi empire".

Two k
fresh

New Polis

Religious
libel case
Singapore

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation Established 1975
 جوردن تايمز يومية عربية سياسية مستقلة تصدر بالانجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية

Chairman of the Board of Directors
 Abdel Salam Tarawneh

Vice Chairman & Director General
 Mohammad Amad

Executive Editor
 Abdullah Hasanat

Responsible Editor
 Elia Nasrallah

Editorial and Advertising offices
 Jordan Press Foundation,
 University Road, P.O. Box 6710, Amman

Telephones: 5684311, 5699634, 5667171, 5603585

Facsimile: Editorial: 5696183, Advertising: 5693337

E-mail: jortimes@go.com.jo

Web Site: <http://www.access2arabia.com/jordantimes/>

The Jordan Times is published daily except Fridays. Subscription and advertising rates are available from the Jordan Times Advertising Department

Not good for the gander

IT IS regrettable that Moscow is suffering untold pressure from the West and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to stay the course of a strictly free market economy or risk losing all support. That the IMF and major Western capitals including of course Washington, insist that Russia make such a choice indicates the West views the meltdown in Russia solely in black and white terms.

Russia's dismal free market economy experience is too obvious to be ignored. Corruption runs rampant, organised crime continues to mushroom, and drug and sex-related crimes are commonplace. Add to these social and economic cancers the fact that workers in several key industries were not paid for months. Even the military was left without pay.

The upshot is that worshippers of free market economy are simply blinded to the fact that some countries cannot shift their economic policies and programmes overnight and that the setting of solid foundations for such about-faces most precede their adoption.

The current standoff between Russian President Boris Yeltsin and the communist controlled Duma is expected to escalate following the Duma's decision to reject the confirmation of acting Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin as premier. The communists under Gennady Zyuganov and their allies seek political reforms that would include a greater role for the legislature. They also seek a mixed economy by nationalising certain industries. The IMF and the West have indicated they will have nothing of that and insist on mapping out Moscow's economic course as they see fit.

Against this backdrop, the Clinton-Yeltsin summit in Moscow is seen as yet another effort by the U.S. to prevent Russia from retreating from its earlier commitment to implement a free market economy regardless of the fact that its dire consequences become increasingly blatant.

It is acknowledged that no system of government or economy is flawless, and each can learn a bit from the other. Each country has its own peculiar economic conditions and cannot blindly pursue economic guidelines simply because they may work for some. Russia should not be cornered and forced to choose between returning to an archaic communist economic order or following unreservedly a free market economy that well suits developed countries. Moscow and its leader need breathing space and elbow room to manoeuvre. President Clinton therefore must refrain from adding pressure to an already steaming situation in Moscow. The ultimate choice must be made by the Russian people, not the outside world.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Ra'i's Raja Al Issa suggested that the government focus on pumping water for Amman from the Disi district in the south east instead of relying on water coming from Lake Tiberias and the Ghor Canal. Noting that the German and Japanese governments have expressed willingness to provide funds to help the government draw the water from Lake Tiberias, the writer said that the government can negotiate with the two donor nations to switch to Disi water, a far better project in the long run. He wrote that Jordan can contribute to this project by employing the engineers corps of the Jordan Armed Forces to lay the pipes and carry out other relevant jobs. The writer added that though such a project would take a long time to complete, it provides a permanent solution to the water shortage crisis facing the Kingdom.

Al Dustour's Oreib Rintawi discussed the current situation in the Middle East, and said that the tense relations between Amman and Tel Aviv are making senior officials on both sides feel despondent about making progress in bilateral relations. Rintawi said the hard-line government of the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had rendered the peace process empty. He noted that it is now the Israeli leaders, who always objected to the Oslo accords, who are currently negotiating the second stage of the Israeli troop redeployment from the West Bank. The writer anticipated that Israeli-Jordanian and Israeli-Egyptian tracks will be frozen as will Israeli relations with Lebanon and Syria. Rintawi hoped for a breakthrough in the peace process rather than further Israeli land confiscations in the occupied territories.

Washington Watch

Clinton's struggle for survival

PRESIDENT CLINTON'S political crisis is by no means over. In fact, it may soon become more complicated and difficult.

While some supporters of the President continue to point to polling data that shows strong public approval of the President's job performance, the polls also show some unsettling results. It is true that two-thirds of the public still feel Clinton has done a good job. The same percentage feels that the scandal story has gone on too long and should be ended. At the same time, almost 75 per cent do not want the President to resign or be impeached by the Congress.

While all those factors remain on the President's side, the President's personal ratings have plummeted, with some polls showing that as many as 60 per cent of the public do not like the President personally and express real concern about his having lied about the Monica Lewinsky affair.

If the opinions of the public were the only factors to be considered, however, the President's position might be secure. What is creating the biggest headaches for the White House, however, is not the public mood, rather it is the steady, hostile, anti-Clinton barrage of articles, editorials and commentary in print and on television — all in the mainstream media.

There is a virtual chorus of denunciations of the President for having lied, for having had sex with an intern and for "breaking trust with his wife and the American people." Many of these in the past week have called on the President to resign and "spare the country any further embarrassment." Even the support that many in the press gave to the President for having bombed Sudan and Afghanistan didn't stop the protest. The fact that most commentators questioned the timing of the attacks and wondered aloud whether it had to do with the scandal, reinforced their conviction that the

President, having lied for seven months about the Lewinsky affair, could no longer be immediately believed.

What is interesting here is that while the public appears willing to compartmentalise their feelings about the President — in other words, "yes he lied about his personal life, but I still trust his leadership judgements" — the press was not willing to take this same step.

This continuing media assault is taking a toll, not immediately on public opinion, although the public may be affected if this barrage of anti-Clinton attacks continues. The first groups to feel the pressure are elected officials in both parties.

August is a congressional recess with all members of Congress back in their home districts campaigning for the fall elections. While there, they are facing sustained questioning by local press about the President's behaviour and some, in an effort to save their political careers, have begun to distance themselves from Clinton.

Republicans obviously have taken the lead in joining the call for the President's resignation. A Republican leader in the Congress announced last week that he has begun a formal campaign to promote that goal.

Democrats, on the other hand, are in a quandary. Most do not want to see the President suffer any further injury, fearing that as his role diminishes, their party's chances in November may also suffer. But some in the party privately feel that if Clinton cannot win back trust, the assault will continue causing further damage to his Presidency and to the party.

The President, himself, is facing the challenge of his political career. His admittedly weak apology speech on the evening of his grand jury testimony did not succeed in putting the scandal to rest. While some advisors are recommending yet a second speech, the President is now making a few for-

ays out into the public to test the climate. His current visit to Russia for a summit with President Boris Yeltsin is one of Clinton's opportunities to display leadership and see if the media and public responds favourably. The ongoing chaos in Russia, however, isn't helping here.

But when the President returns and Congress reconvenes in September, the real test will come. By then we will know if Independent Counsel Kenneth Starr intends to deliver an impeachment report to Congress and what that report will contain.

If, as expected, the graphic details of Monica Lewinsky's testimony to the grand jury become public, the President's embarrassing situation will only worsen. And if Congress and the press continue to focus on the scandal it will become increasingly difficult for the President or Democrats to raise any issues of substance in order to define their agenda for the November elections.

If, at that point, the President cannot find a way to firmly put the scandal behind him (and only a direct and convincing apology will do: there is no way that this matter can be side-stepped), win back public trust and re-establish the ability to define the issues being discussed in the media, then he will be confronted with a fateful choice.

Even with strong public support, his Presidency and his ability to lead his party and the country will be seriously questioned. He will then have to decide whether to continue to endure the onslaught of controversy and a long-drawn out congressional impeachment process (and the accompanying embarrassing press coverage it will generate) or to resign.

It is still too early to count Bill Clinton out, he may yet find a way to ride out this storm. If he succeeds, it will be the most remarkable comeback of his career.

LETTERS

Innocent until proven guilty

To the editor:

HAVING READ William R. Ennenbach's letter to the Editor, August 31, I could not help but wonder where he gets his information from, and what gives him the right to question the legitimacy and transparency of the Jordanian Judiciary, an independent branch of the Jordanian political establishment. To prove my first point, i.e. his ignorance of the subject matter, he suggests that the Attorney General has ordered the media not to write about the water crisis, which he thinks is an attempt to suppress information from the public regarding the whole issue. What Ennenbach fails to understand, is that Amman's Prosecutor General has ordered the media to refrain from publishing anything about the judicial investigation, NOT the technical details of the issue itself. In other words, the Attorney General is saying that he is currently investigating how the problem happened and who was responsible, and until this investigation is complete it is unfair to speculate. Has Ennenbach not heard of "innocent until proven guilty"? Or do these principles only apply in the West, and we lesser mortals are not allowed to apply them? What the Attorney General has done sounds quite reasonable to me, especially that the media can indeed write, and incidentally, have been writing extensively, about the water distribution problems, water shortage, water quality and so on. If Ennenbach is reading or hearing less about the water crisis, maybe it's actually because the problem has largely eased. I live in west Amman myself, and have not had a problem with the water for over ten days now.

I do not know where Mr. Ennenbach comes from, but I wonder what gives him the right to doubt the country's Judicial system suggesting that it would "suppress the media, as a means of avoiding dealing with unpleasant political and economic situations." He is quite free to level such accusations at the Government, the new Press and Publications Law, or whoever and whatever he please, but accusing the Judiciary, is perhaps going a bit too far. In any other "civilised" country he would either be held in contempt or taken to court for interfering with justice. We have had enough of "enlightened" individuals telling us how to run the country. I would suggest that they try to sort out their own problems before pontificating to us about ours.

Khaled Suleiman
 P.O. Box 941157,
 Amman, 11194

There is only one God and His name is Allah. And Abraham, Jesus and Mohammad are His prophets

By Maïse Ruthven

ISLAM IS OFTEN blamed for providing the ideological fuel for terrorist movements. Even when efforts are made to distinguish between "fundamentalist extremists" and the "moderate majority," some of the mud, or Semtex, sticks. The cumulative effect of headlines such as "Islamic terrorists strike again" is to create the impression that the religion, if not inherently violent, is somehow responsible for violent actions committed in its name.

Religions run deeper than purely secular ideologies, mobilising feelings and powerfully-held beliefs — and above all personal and group identities. In the Muslim World it is only to be expected that, after the failure of nationalist governments to deliver on the expectations raised by independence from Ottoman and Western empires, political movements which seek to challenge the status quo will use the language of Islam.

The language is sanctioned by history, by tradition — as Muslims see it, by God himself. Indeed for a majority of adherents, the Koran, the sacred text of Islam, is not just the Word of God, but an aspect of the godhead, a manifestation of the divine in language.

Much of the Islamist rhetoric, through which contemporary discontent is articulated, involves attacks on the West and particularly on the United States — the Great Satan demonised by the Ayatollah Khomeini and his followers during the Iranian revolution of 1979.

Demonisation of the West by some Muslim radicals generates a reciprocal response in the demonisation of Islam. In Britain and America the popular press picks up on these responses: the result is Islamophobia, what might be called across-the-board anti-Muslim hostility — the counterpart, in its way, of anti-semitism.

The polemicising based on the idea of mutual antipathy between "Islam" and the "West" conceals far more than it reveals about the two faith systems. Broadly speaking, Islam bears the same relation to Christianity that Christianity bears to Judaism: it was originally an offshoot that drew on the same repertoire of concepts, myths and sacred histories, and deployed them in somewhat different ways.

The value systems of mainstream Islam and mainstream Christianity (the demand for social justice expressed through worship of a Divine Creator deemed to be the fount of all truth and love) are broadly similar. What divides the two faiths in terms of formal theology (the incarnation, rejected by Muslims, along with the doctrine of vicarious atonement) is less important than what they hold in common. The youngest of the three Abrahamic faiths, Islam incorporates many of the narratives and nomenclatures of its predecessors: there may be precious few Christians or Jews named after Mohammad, but there are plenty of Muslims who have taken the names of honoured prophets in the Judaeo-Christian tradition: Ibrahim (Abraham), Musa (Moses), Yusuf (Joseph), Isma'il (Isaac) and Isa (Jesus) are popular Muslim names.

There are Muslims who engage in acts of violence and destruction, just as there are Jews, Christians, Sikhs, Hindus and members of other faiths who engage in terrorism. But where commentators usually make it clear that in most traditions extremists come from small unrepresentative minorities, or like the Hindu Tamil Tigers) have specific local agendas, Muslims tend to be tarred with the terrorist brush in a more generalised way.

The problem arises in part because there is no consistency in the way that religious-political labels are applied. In Ireland the explicit and highly visible condemnations of terrorist acts by church authorities from both sides of the religious divide have generally persuaded the British media to adopt secular labels when pointing to the motivations.

When Muslims explode bombs or murder civilians in furtherance of a political cause, individual leaders or spokespersons may condemn such acts as contrary to the teachings of Islam, but such condemnations are rarely reported because there are no Muslim institutions with enough "clout" in the media community to ensure that these voices are heard.

Here the essentially "democratic" character of mainstream Islamic religious organisation is at certain disadvantage: Islam has no church. Each and every believer is theoretically answerable for his or her own actions before God, and though there are religious specialists (the ulama or learned men) trained in the interpretation of theology and law, there is no formal hierarchy to which all the believers will automatically defer.

Hence when Omar Al Bakri, leader of the Mujahidun, a small radical group in Britain, is invited on to the Today programme and gives his approval to the Nairobi and Dar Al Salam atrocities, the average listener may gain the impression that he speaks for many more Muslims than is actually the case.

Members of what is perhaps the largest Islamic revival movement in Britain, the Tablighi Jamaat, who are discouraged from engaging in politics, are conspicuously absent from public debate.

The same omissions tend to occur with foreign coverage. Denunciations of "terrorism in all its forms," including the Nairobi and Dar Al Salam bombings and the American attacks on Sudan and Afghanistan, by the Sheikh Al Azhar, generally considered to be the highest religious authority in the Sunni Muslim World, were generally ignored by the Western press, as

were explicit denunciations of the alleged perpetrator, Osama Ben Laden, described by the Iranian government news agency as "the real criminal" behind the explosions.

Similarly, the condemnations of the massacre at Luxor in Egypt of more than 60 Western tourists by a faction of the Islamist Gamaat Al Islamiyah in November 1997 by Arab and Muslim leaders, including the Lebanese Hizbollah and Sheikh Ahmad Yassin, leader of the Palestinian Hamas organisation (which boasts its own toll of atrocities against civilians) were barely reported. The newspapers preferred to focus on alleged connections between the Egyptian terrorists and Sheikh Omar Abdul Raham, the blind cleric currently serving a sentence for the World Trade Centre bombing in 1994.

When David Koresh engulfed himself and his followers in the fiery holocaust at Waco in Texas, few commentators held the Seventh Day Adventist Church, from which the Branch Davidians stems, responsible or blamed the pre-millennialist theology shared by millions of American Protestants for fostering this particular example of end-of-the-world survivalism.

If Americans, Europeans or Israelis indulge in acts of violence or terrorism, the lenses of the media invariably distinguish the mainstream from the "lunatic fringe," creating the comforting impression that violence is exceptional rather than endemic in certain situations. When Muslims engage in violence their acts are inclined to be seen as somehow typical, a manifestation of some violent essence that inheres in the faith.

The Observer



Feat
 Muham
 ons and th
 company
 drome rela
 Ali wi
 Lending a h
 The Observer

Features

Always the greatest

Muhammad Ali, three times undisputed heavyweight champion of the world, this year pledged, through his charity Global Village Championships and the logistical assistance of CARE and the International Red Cross, to provide 100 million meals where they are needed most. The company has already provided 30 million meals around the world over the last three years. Despite suffering from parkinsonism, a syndrome related to Parkinson's disease, Ali remains as remarkable as when he first shuffled into the limelight stinging like a bee, floating like a butterfly as David Maraniss of the Washington Post reports (photos by Carol Guzy)

NO WORDS at first. The greeting comes from his eyes, then a handshake, light as a butterfly, followed by a gesture that says, "Follow me." He has just popped out the back door of his farm house wearing green pants and a light brown wool pullover with sunglasses tucked coolly into the mock turtleneck collar.

He is carrying an old black briefcase. His hair is longer than usual and a bit uncombed. He starts walking toward his office, a converted barn on the lower end of the circular driveway.

He moves slowly, lurching slightly forward as he goes, never a stumble but sometimes seeming on the verge of one, as though his world slopes downhill. He opens the door and stands aside, following, not leading, on the way upstairs to his second floor office. Halfway up, it becomes clear why. He sticks out a hand and catches his visitor's foot from behind.

The old tip-up-the-stairs trick. Muhammad Ali loves tricks.

At the top of the stairs is the headquar-

ter of GOAT. Another trick. It is the playfully ironic acronym for Greatest of All Time. Incorporated. Ali wants the world to know that he is just another goat, one living thing in this vast and miraculous universe. But also the greatest there ever was. He is 55, his mouth and body slowed by Parkinson's disease, yet still arguably the best known and most beloved figure in the world. Who else? The Pope? Nelson Mandela? Michael Jordan? Ali might win in a split decision.

Even the most dramatic lives move in cycles of loss and recovery. Two years ago in Atlanta, when Ali stood alone in the spotlight, the world watching, his hands trembling, and lit the Olympic flame, he began another cycle, perhaps his ultimate comeback, as emotional as Joe Frazier or George Foreman. For 16 years he had been retired from boxing. During that time he had gone through periods of boredom and uncertainty. Not that he was passé, but the world tends to forget its old kings when new ones come around.

He kept going as best he could, his health deteriorating, spreading good will with his smiling eyes, trying to keep his name alive. Then, finally, his moment arrived again, first at the Olympics, then at the Academy Awards, where he bore silent witness to "When We Were Kings," the Oscar-winning documentary about his dramatic heavyweight championship fight in October 1974 against George Foreman in what was then Zaire.

The shimmering house of movie stars seemed diminished, their egos preposterous, when Ali rose and stood before them. Yet some saw in that appearance a hint of the maulin: Poor Ali, enfeebled and paunchy, dragged out as another melodramatic Hollywood gimmick. Was he real or was he memory? What was left of him if he could no longer float and sting? Quite a bit, it turns out. No sorrow and pity from the champ. He says he cherishes his performance at the Olympics and the Academy Awards more than any one could know.

Publicity is his lifeblood, more important to him than any medicine he is supposed to take.

"Press keeps me alive, man," he says, with an honesty that softens the edge of his ego.

"Press keeps me alive. Press and TV. The Olympics. Academy Awards. 'When We Were Kings.' Keeps me alive."

When the producers sent him a videotape of "When We Were Kings," he stuck it into his VCR at home and watched it day after day. At a recent autograph extravaganza in Las Vegas, he conducted his own poll by comparing his line to those for Jim Brown, Paul Hornung, Bobby Hull and Ernie Banks. Twice as long as any of them. Staying alive. And the biggest life-

saver of all; that night in Atlanta, 36 years after he had first danced onto the world scene as the brash young Olympic champion Cassius Marcellus Clay.

Long after the torch scene was over, Ali would not let go. He went back to his suite with his wife, Lonnie, and a few close friends. They were tired, emotionally drained from the surprise, anxiety and thrill of the occasion, but Ali would not go to sleep. He was still holding the long white and gold torch, which he had kept as a prized memento. He cradled it in his arms, turning it over and over, just looking at it, not saying much, sitting in a big chair, smiling, hour after hour.

"I think the man was just awed. Just completely awed by the whole experience," Lonnie Ali recalled. "He was so excited. It took forever for him to go to bed. He was on such a high. He found it very hard to come back down to earth. There was just such a fabulous response. No one expected that. None of us did."

bag. For the next quarter-hour, he performs the simple, delightful tricks of an apprentice magician. Balls and coins appear and disappear, ropes change lengths, sticks turn colours. "Maan! Maan! Heavy!" he says.

Then he turns to slapstick. Close your eyes and open your hand. The champ places something soft and fuzzy in it. "Mmmm. Okay. Open." A fuzzy toy mouse.

Ali beams at the startled reaction. His voice becomes louder, higher, more animated. "Ehhhh! He shrieks. "Kids go 'Ahhhh! Ahhhhh!'"

Try it again. This time it's a cockroach. And again. This time grey dog doo.

Ali closes his grey toolbox and puts it away, satisfied. Perception and Deception. What is going on here? In part it is just Ali amusing himself with magic tricks that he has been doing over and over for many years for anyone who comes to see him. But he is also, as always, making a more profound point.

He has transferred his old boxing skills and his poetry and his homespun philosophy to another realm, from words to magic. The world sees him now, lurching a bit, slurring some, getting old, trembling, and recalls that unspeakably great and gorgeous and garrulous young man that he once was. He understands that contrast. But, he is saying, nothing is as it appears. Life is always a matter of perception and deception.

Poets and philosophers contemplate this, and boxers know it intuitively. (Ali ghost boxing before the Foreman fight: "Come get me, sucker. I'm dancin'! I'm dancin'! No, I'm not here, I'm there! You're out, sucker!") Back when he was Cassius Clay, he pretended that he was demented before fighting Sonny Liston because he had heard that the only cons who scared big Sonny in prison were the madmen. By acting crazy, he not only injected a dose of fear into Liston, he took some out of himself. Life is a trick.

The Islamic religion, to which Ali has adhered for more than 30 years, disproves of magic tricks, but he has found his way around that problem, as always.

"When...do...a...trick," he says now. He seems more easily understandable. Is he speaking more clearly or has the ear adjusted to him?

"I...always...show...people...how...to...do...it," he smiles.

"Show...people...how...easy...it...is...to...be...tricked."

Perception and deception. He has returned to his chair in the office, with his black briefcase on his lap. Slowly and carefully he opens it up...click...click...and looks inside as though he is examining its contents for the first time.

Tucked in the upper compartment is his passport. Parkinson's has not slowed his travels. He's at home no more than 90 days a year. Washington, Los Angeles, Louisville, Las Vegas in a week, doing good deeds. He visits schools, campaigns against child abuse, for more Parkinson's funding, for peace and tolerance. Every one wants to see the champ. Germany is clamouring for him. His national television network just ran an hour-long documentary on him.

Next to the passport is a laminated trading card. He lifts it out and studies it. There's Ali next to Sugar Ray Robinson and Joe Louis. "Two of the greatest fighters in the world," he says. He pauses. "Mmmmm. Both dead."

Ali thinks a lot about death. Ageing and death and life after death. His philosophy is at once selfish and selfless. Publicity keeps him alive. He wants to stay alive so he can make people happy and do good deeds. And "good deeds are the rent we pay for our house in heaven."

He is teaching and preaching now. A new poetry, slower, no rhymes, stream of consciousness, deeper meaning.

"Make two hundred thousand a day. Signing. Hundred dollars a picture long lines. Bring in millions of dollars."

I'm not fighting no more I'll sign for nothin'. Give it to charity. Get the money, give it to the homeless. Give it to soup lines. If I see someone who needs some: here's a hundred. Here's fifty. Soup vendor. Wino. Old woman with varicose veins. Good deeds. Judgment. I'm well pleased with my son. Come into heaven.

That's the eternal life. Maan! Maan! Look at all the buildings in downtown New York. People built them. They're dead. Buildings still standing. You don't own nothin'. Just a trustee. Think about it. You die. This life's a test. A test. Trying to pass the test. I'm tryin'. Warm bodies. Shake hands. Gone. All dead now. President Kennedy. Whatever colour you are. No matter how much money you have. Politics. Sports. You're gonna die.

Sleep is the brother of death." Ali closes his eyes. He starts snoring. Reopens his eyes. "Turn over now. It's morning." Back to the black briefcase. Stacked in rows along the bottom are a collection of little leather books, five of them, in red and pink and green. It turns out they are Bibles. Why he needs five in a briefcase is not clear. What he does with them is part of the mystery of Muhammad Ali.

Ali began showing signs of trouble as far back as 1980, when he lost the heavyweight title in his 60th and next to last fight, against Larry Holmes. He visited several medical experts over the next few years and finally parkinsonism, a syndrome related to Parkinson's disease, was diagnosed. Parkinson's is a slowly progressive disease, suffered by an estimated 1.5 million Americans, that causes cells in the middle part of the brain to degenerate, reducing the production of the chemical dopamine and leading to tremors, slowness of movement, memory loss and other neurological symptoms. Its cause is unknown.

People who suffer from parkinsonism have many of the same symptoms but in a milder and usually undegenerative form. Until recently, most of his doctors believed Ali had the syndrome, not the disease. Over the past 18 months that diagnosis has been changing and the belief now is that he might have the disease.

Some doctors who have examined Ali remain convinced that his ailment was brought on by the pounding he took in the ring, especially the brutal fights late in his career against Frazier, Foreman and Holmes. Mahlon DeLong, his Parkinson's physician at Emory University in Atlanta, and other experts argue, however, that Ali must have had a predisposition to the disease. They note that most "punch drunk" old fighters do not show signs of Parkinson's, but more often suffer from something known as Marland syndrome, with intellectual deficits that Ali does not show.

His disorder, in any case, is not as debilitating as one might suspect from catching a brief glimpse of him. He is agile enough to dress himself each morning. He knots his ties perfectly. He lifts his legs to put on his socks. Laces his shoes. Slips on his Swiss Army watch. Feeds himself. Opens doors. Performs magic tricks. Reads his Bibles and Korans. Writes legibly. Talks on the telephone. Understands everything said to him and around him. Flips the remote on his television to watch CNN and Biography and the Discovery Channel.

"He doesn't need any help from me," Lonnie Ali says, meaning in the physical sense. "The only thing I may assist Muhammad with, because he is nearsighted and doesn't wear glasses, is shaving. He misses some spots." His main problem, she said, is that he shows little interest in keeping up with medical treatments. "I can offer him all the care in the world. His doctors can give him all the care in the world. It is up to him. Muhammad tends to ignore it."

point he wants to make. Could knock you out in 10 seconds. His middle looks soft until it is felt, like steel.

At the turn in the driveway he reaches the far garage and his beige on brown Corvair sedan. He slowly eases himself into the driver's seat, then struggles out and onto his feet again, and starts fishing in his pants for the keys. He pulls out a set, examines them, picks a key, settles back into the car, tries to insert it into the ignition. Doesn't fit. He starts over again, pulling more sets of keys out of his deep pocket. Two sets. Three sets. Four sets. Which is it? None fit. He gets out again and walks to the rear of the car and points to the license: Virginia plates with a '93 sticker. "Haven't driven it in four years," he says. He leaves the garage and walks toward the fence, where a black Ford pickup is parked. The seat is too close to the steering wheel for him, and he has a difficult time squeezing in. It takes him a few minutes, but now he is there, behind the wheel, and he has a key that fits and the engine starts and he motions to climb in.

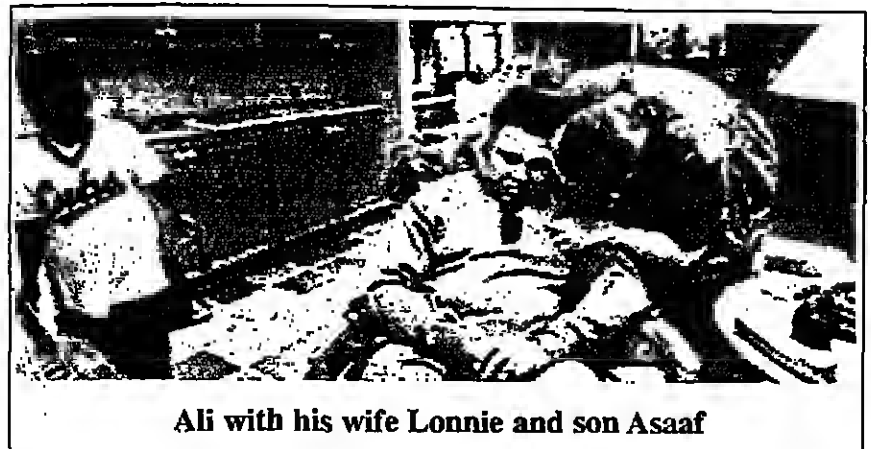
As the truck reaches the front entrance, Ali stops, waiting for the electronic gate to open. His eyes close. He starts snoring. He can fall asleep any time of day, his doctors say, but he often only pretends to, and people around him can never be sure if he is dozing or duping.

Only a trick this time. The gate opens. The black pickup goes flying up the road, free and swaying. He always loved to speed. In the old days he might take the wheel of the press bus at training camp and scare the daylight out of the boxing scribes. He is doing it again. What is going on here? No reason to fear. Muhammad Ali is heading out to see the world. He is hungry, and he knows what he wants: some love and affirmation and a quarter-pounder with mustard and onions at the local McDonald's. The love is there the moment he pulls in the parking lot. Everyone wants an autograph, and he joyfully obliges. They call him champ and hero and par his back and shake his hand and kiss him and smile at him and show him pictures and stare at him. They say they will miss him if he moves, as he and Lonnie plan to do before the year is out, down to Louisville, his hometown, where he is setting up a Muhammad Ali centre. He smiles back with his eyes.

No need to feel sorry for the champ, he wants you to know. "My life is a party," he says softly, chewing his quarter-pounder. "Every day. Imagine. Every day. Things are quiet here. Imagine how it must be when I go to New York. Harlem. Detroit. Philly. Walk into a gym. The streets. Look at me. Imagine what it's like."

After lunch, Ali returns to the farm and resumes a tour of the grounds. He comes to a barn and slides open the door and looks inside. There, in the dim darkness, is an extraordinary thing. Look up in the rafters. Trophies lining the hayloft beam, one bigger than the next. Gathering dust. And attached to the wall: a huge black-and-white blowup of the young Ali, gloved hands aloft in triumph, after one of his title matches with Joe Frazier. He stares at his own image, the greatest of all time.

People often wonder about the past; how beautiful it would be if they realised the present. Ali turns and steps out of the barn. He slides the wooden door to the right. Is it closed? He notices an opening on the left. He slides it to the left. Now there is an opening on the right. He decides to leave it that way, a ray of light filtering in, and walks down the path to his home.



Ali with his wife Lonnie and son Asaaf

Tricks and treats

By the time he and Lonnie returned to their farm house here in southern Michigan, the mail was already backing up, flooding in at tenfold the previous pace. Letters from everywhere. The return of a trembling Ali had unleashed powerful feelings in people. They said they cried at his beauty and perseverance. They said he reminded them of what it means to stand up for something you believe in. Disabled people. Old sixties activists. Republicans. Black. White. Christian. Jewish. Muslim. A little boy from Germany, a boxing fan from England, a radiologist from Sudan, a secretary from Saudi Arabia — the multitudes thanked him for giving them hope.

When Ali reaches his office, he takes his customary chair against the side wall. There is work to be done, the room is overcrowded with mementoes to be signed for charity, and his assistant, Kim Forbinger, is waiting for him with a big blue felt pen. But Ali has something else in mind right now.

"Mmmmm. Watch this, man," he says. His voice sounds like the soft, slurred grumble-whisper of someone trying to clear his throat on the way out of a deep sleep.

Conversing with him for the first time, one unavoidably has to say, "I'm sorry, what?" now and then, or simply pretend to understand him, but soon enough one adjusts, and it becomes obvious that Parkinson's has not slowed his brain, only his motor skills. Ali walks toward the doorway and looks back with a smile.

"Oh, have you seen Muhammad levitate yet?" Forbinger asks. She suddenly becomes the female assistant in a Vegas act. With a sweep of her hand, she says, "Come over here. Stand right behind him. Now watch his feet. Watch his feet."

Ali goes still and silent, meditating. His hands stop shaking. He seems to radiate something. A mystical aura? Ever so slowly, his feet rise from the floor, one inch, three inches, six inches. His hands are not touching anything. "Ehhhh. Pretty heavy, mmmmm," he says. His visitor, familiar with the lore of

Ali's levitations, yet easily duped, watches slack-jawed as the champ floats in the air for several seconds.

Come over here, Ali motions. To the side. "Look," he says. He is not really levitating, of course. He has managed to balance himself perfectly. Parkinson's notwithstanding, all 250 pounds of him, on the tiptoes of his right foot, creating an optical illusion from behind that both of his feet have lifted off the ground.

The tricks have only just begun. He hauls out a huge grey plastic toolbox, opens it and peers inside. His hands now move with the delicacy of a surgeon selecting the correct instrument from his

bag. For the next quarter-hour, he performs the simple, delightful tricks of an apprentice magician. Balls and coins appear and disappear, ropes change lengths, sticks turn colours. "Maan! Maan! Heavy!" he says.

Then he turns to slapstick. Close your eyes and open your hand. The champ places something soft and fuzzy in it. "Mmmm. Okay. Open." A fuzzy toy mouse.

Ali beams at the startled reaction. His voice becomes louder, higher, more animated. "Ehhhh! He shrieks. "Kids go 'Ahhhh! Ahhhhh!'"

Try it again. This time it's a cockroach. And again. This time grey dog doo.

Ali closes his grey toolbox and puts it away, satisfied. Perception and Deception. What is going on here? In part it is just Ali amusing himself with magic tricks that he has been doing over and over for many years for anyone who comes to see him. But he is also, as always, making a more profound point.

He has transferred his old boxing skills and his poetry and his homespun philosophy to another realm, from words to magic. The world sees him now, lurching a bit, slurring some, getting old, trembling, and recalls that unspeakably great and gorgeous and garrulous young man that he once was. He understands that contrast. But, he is saying, nothing is as it appears. Life is always a matter of perception and deception.

Poets and philosophers contemplate this, and boxers know it intuitively. (Ali ghost boxing before the Foreman fight: "Come get me, sucker. I'm dancin'! I'm dancin'! No, I'm not here, I'm there! You're out, sucker!") Back when he was Cassius Clay, he pretended that he was demented before fighting Sonny Liston because he had heard that the only cons who scared big Sonny in prison were the madmen. By acting crazy, he not only injected a dose of fear into Liston, he took some out of himself. Life is a trick.

The Islamic religion, to which Ali has adhered for more than 30 years, disproves of magic tricks, but he has found his way around that problem, as always.

"When...do...a...trick," he says now. He seems more easily understandable. Is he speaking more clearly or has the ear adjusted to him?

"I...always...show...people...how...to...do...it," he smiles.

"Show...people...how...easy...it...is...to...be...tricked."

Perception and deception. He has returned to his chair in the office, with his black briefcase on his lap. Slowly and carefully he opens it up...click...click...and looks inside as though he is examining its contents for the first time.

Tucked in the upper compartment is his passport. Parkinson's has not slowed his travels. He's at home no more than 90 days a year. Washington, Los Angeles, Louisville, Las Vegas in a week, doing good deeds. He visits schools, campaigns against child abuse, for more Parkinson's funding, for peace and tolerance. Every one wants to see the champ. Germany is clamouring for him. His national television network just ran an hour-long documentary on him.

Next to the passport is a laminated trading card. He lifts it out and studies it. There's Ali next to Sugar Ray Robinson and Joe Louis. "Two of the greatest fighters in the world," he says. He pauses. "Mmmmm. Both dead."

Ali thinks a lot about death. Ageing and death and life after death. His philosophy is at once selfish and selfless. Publicity keeps him alive. He wants to stay alive so he can make people happy and do good deeds. And "good deeds are the rent we pay for our house in heaven."

He is teaching and preaching now. A new poetry, slower, no rhymes, stream of consciousness, deeper meaning.

"Make two hundred thousand a day. Signing. Hundred dollars a picture long lines. Bring in millions of dollars."

I'm not fighting no more I'll sign for nothin'. Give it to charity. Get the money, give it to the homeless. Give it to soup lines. If I see someone who needs some: here's a hundred. Here's fifty. Soup vendor. Wino. Old woman with varicose veins. Good deeds. Judgment. I'm well pleased with my son. Come into heaven.

That's the eternal life. Maan! Maan! Look at all the buildings in downtown New York. People built them. They're dead. Buildings still standing. You don't own nothin'. Just a trustee. Think about it. You die. This life's a test. A test. Trying to pass the test. I'm tryin'. Warm bodies. Shake hands. Gone. All dead now. President Kennedy. Whatever colour you are. No matter how much money you have. Politics. Sports. You're gonna die.

Sleep is the brother of death." Ali closes his eyes. He starts snoring. Reopens his eyes. "Turn over now. It's morning." Back to the black briefcase. Stacked in rows along the bottom are a collection of little leather books, five of them, in red and pink and green. It turns out they are Bibles. Why he needs five in a briefcase is not clear. What he does with them is part of the mystery of Muhammad Ali.



Ali has been a devout Muslim since disowning his 'slave name', Cassius Clay

malice in his hobby, though it is hardly what one might expect from a missionary of universal healing.

What is going on here? The question is later put to Lonnie Ali. She is his fourth wife, wholly devoted to his well-being, a smart, funny and gracious woman, graduate of Vanderbilt University, who started cooking for him when he was getting sick, married him 12 years ago, and is serving more and more as his public voice. She knows that he is not perfect, but she also appreciates his larger meaning to the world. Muhammad, she says, is greater than his individual parts. He means so many things to so many people, and she is determined to preserve that, sometimes in spite of him. She has known him since she was 6 years old and growing up in Louisville in the house across the street from his mother, Odessa Clay.

Why is Ali doing this? She shrugs at the question. That, she says, "is part of the dichotomy that is Muhammad. Even when Muhammad was in the Nation of Islam where they considered whites devils he was putting little white kids on his lap and kissing them and loving them. Muhammad could really care less if a person is of another religion. But Muhammad found out that there are contradictions in the Bible and he's hooked on that. If he can get you to say, 'Oh, look, I never knew that,' then it's like he has accomplished a victory. Muhammad is a warrior. And he finds these little things to battle over."

There certainly seem to be more important battles now for Muhammad Ali. Perception and deception. How sick is he?

Finding the Key

Ali is on the move now, heading down the steps and out onto the grounds of his 88-acre farm. It is an unexpected paradise at the end of the road in the middle of Middle America, between South Bend and Benton Harbor. Once belonged to Al Capone, a mobster's hideaway. "Found...machine...guns," Ali says. There is a gentle pond, a gazebo where he prays to Allah, a playground for the youngest of his nine children, 6-year-old Asaad, whom he and Lonnie adopted at birth; acres of sweet-blooming perennials, woods at the edge of the field, the St. Joe River rolling by, white picket fences and white and green barns.

On his way down the looping driveway, Ali cannot resist some playful sparring. His hands stop shaking as he bobs and weaves and dances backwards. His condition seems irrelevant, or at least that is the

malice in his hobby, though it is hardly what one might expect from a missionary of universal healing.

What is going on here? The question is later put to Lonnie Ali. She is his fourth wife, wholly devoted to his well-being, a smart, funny and gracious woman, graduate of Vanderbilt University, who started cooking for him when he was getting sick, married him 12 years ago, and is serving more and more as his public voice. She knows that he is not perfect, but she also appreciates his larger meaning to the world. Muhammad, she says, is greater than his individual parts. He means so many things to so many people, and she is determined to preserve that, sometimes in spite of him. She has known him since she was 6 years old and growing up in Louisville in the house across the street from his mother, Odessa Clay.

Why is Ali doing this? She shrugs at the question. That, she says, "is part of the dichotomy that is Muhammad. Even when Muhammad was in the Nation of Islam where they considered whites devils he was putting little white kids on his lap and kissing them and loving them. Muhammad could really care less if a person is of another religion. But Muhammad found out that there are contradictions in the Bible and he's hooked on that. If he can get you to say, 'Oh, look, I never knew that,' then it's like he has accomplished a victory. Muhammad is a warrior. And he finds these little things to battle over."

There certainly seem to be more important battles now for Muhammad Ali. Perception and deception. How sick is he?



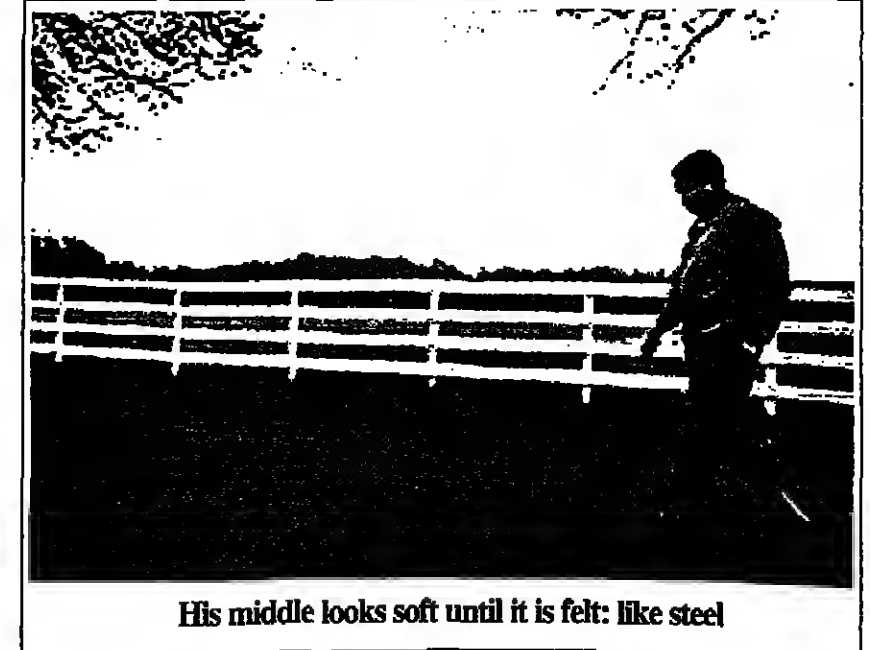
Lending a hand to those less fortunate

Europeans or Israelis might see or terrorism in the name of the fringe, "creating a new world that violence is a necessary evil in certain situations where it is in violence that we are as somehow typical of the violent essence that under-

Europeans or Israelis might see or terrorism in the name of the fringe, "creating a new world that violence is a necessary evil in certain situations where it is in violence that we are as somehow typical of the violent essence that under-

Europeans or Israelis might see or terrorism in the name of the fringe, "creating a new world that violence is a necessary evil in certain situations where it is in violence that we are as somehow typical of the violent essence that under-

Europeans or Israelis might see or terrorism in the name of the fringe, "creating a new world that violence is a necessary evil in certain situations where it is in violence that we are as somehow typical of the violent essence that under-



His middle looks soft until it is felt: like steel

Sampras and Hingis breeze in U.S. Open starts

NEW YORK (AFP) — World No. 1 Pete Sampras and Martina Hingis moved closer in quarter-final showdowns with Andre Agassi and Monica Seles as all won their first-round matches Monday at the U.S. Open.

Sampras began pursuit of his record-tying 12th Grand Slam singles title by beating Germany's Marc Goellner 6-3, 6-2, 6-2.

while Hingis began defence of her crown by ousting Poland's Aleksandra Olsza 6-2, 6-0.

On collision courses with the top seeds here are sixth seed Seles, who ousted Argentina's Florencia Labat 7-6 (7/0), 6-2, and eighth seed Agassi, who beat France's Sebastian Grosjean 6-4, 6-1, 6-4 in 97 minutes.

Sampras, seeking his fifth

U.S. Open crown, won Wimbledon in July to move within one of Roy Emerson's all-time Slam singles record. He also wants to finish 1998 atop the ratings for a record sixth year in a row.

"The Grand Slam record is something I hopefully will achieve over the course of my career," Sampras said. "The number one is going to depend a lot upon

what happens here in the next two weeks."

Part of that will depend on Agassi, who won two hard-court tuneups and reached the final in another. He enters the \$14 million event, the year's final Grand Slam tournament, with confidence.

"I certainly do feel like it's time and I'm playing with purpose," Agassi said. "I know I haven't played my best tennis yet. I will be forced to step it up. I can play better here than I have all summer."

Arthur Ashe Stadium court proved the quickest Sampras has ever played upon here. Agassi, who next faces France's Guillaume Raoux, said the fast surface will help Sampras and defending champion Pat Rafter of Australia.

"The court is definitely quicker. There is no question about it," Agassi said. "Pete is going to like this court. Rafter is going to like this court. It's going to hurt a lot of the Spanish players."

Sampras, whose next foe is Paul Goldstein, said he was uncertain if the draw provided proper preparation for a quarter-final with Agassi. But he comes here confident.

"Winning at Wimbledon brings out the best in me. Since I have won here before, I come in here pretty confident," Sampras said. "I've created this standard where if I don't win a major for a year something is wrong. That's tough to do in this game."

Sampras also found it difficult to compare his success to that of Emerson because tennis has undergone three decades of evolution and a huge increase in players since those days.

"The way I look at the record, it's pretty much a number," Sampras said. "I try to compare my tennis to what I have done in the

modern era. To compare the game to 30 years ago, it's just too tough."

Sampras said he has no greater desire for victory this year at the Open, even with tennis history at stake.

"I'm not treating this U.S. Open any different than the previous ones," Sampras said. "Any time you win Wimbledon it's a good year. Sure it hasn't been the most consistent year. But I will do everything I can to play my best tennis here."

Sampras served 11 aces, the fastest at 131 mph, to dispatch Goellner in 84 minutes.

"The first match you are always on edge out there," he said. "I got off to a really good start and played well. You just want to stay sharp, get used to the court and the surroundings, get into the tournament."

Hingis, who has not won a WTA title since the Italian Open in early May, won 12 titles last year but has stumbled in four semi-finals and a title match since.

"Of course last year was better, but this year wasn't as bad as I sometimes hear on TV — Martina Hingis was so beatable this year. Well not by everybody," Hingis said. "I don't think my tennis has dropped as much as some of the other players."

The Swiss teen sensation into the second round against World No. 21 Iva Majoli of Croatia, who has been ranked as high as fourth.

Austria's Thomas Muster, ranked 23rd, was the first to oust a seed, needing only 96 minutes to eliminate 15th-seeded Spaniard Alberto Berasategui 7-6 (7/1), 6-2, 6-3. He next plays Zimbabwe's Wayne Black.

Wimbledon runner-up Goran Ivanisevic served 23 aces to beat Australian Mark Woodforde 6-3, 6-4, 6-4 in 87 minutes. The Croatian, a first-round loser here three of the past four



Pete Sampras

years, next plays American Todd Martin.

"It's so nice winning in the first round. It's a nice sign," Ivanisevic said. "If I can continue to serve like this it will be great."

Tuesday's featured men's matches find defending

champion Pat Rafter of Australia facing Morocco's Hicham Arazi and runner-up Greg Rusedski of Britain playing South Africa's Wayne Ferreira.

Women's action finds former world number one Steffi Graf playing

American Corina Morariu, Wimbledon winner Jana Novotna facing American Jennifer Capriati, Russia's Anna Kournikova against France's Lea Chirardi and 1997 US Open runner-up Venus Williams against Germany's Elena Wagner.



Monica Seles

Tennis Glance

NEW YORK (AP) — A look at the sights and sounds of the U.S. Open.

STARS

Michael Chang captured his first title of 1998, the MFS Pro Championships in Brookline, Mass., with a 6-3, 6-4 victory over Paul Haarhuis.

Steffi Graf beat Jana Novotna 6-4, 6-1 to win the Pilot Pen in New Haven, Connecticut, her first title since May 1997.

Patrick Rafter won the Hamlet Cup in Commack, New York, by defeating Felix Mantilla 7-6 (7-3), 6-2.

SPEAKING

"It's been a long way, but it's special to be here right now, to be at this point," — Steffi Graf, after winning the Pilot Pen International.

"I definitely have a chance to win if the draw opens up a bit. I have to keep my energy level up, especially if the weather continues hot and humid, as it has been here," — Patrick Rafter, defending U.S. Open champion.

"My goal this year is definitely to win the tournament. I think there is no other options available," — Venus Williams.

"You can't look ahead, that's kind of the kiss of death," — Pete Sampras, a four-time U.S. Open champion.

"Beatings... there have been more of them than anyone can imagine," — Mirjana Lucic, saying why she, her four siblings and her mother left her father and moved from Croatia to the United States.

"If I slammed her, that was because she didn't behave nicely, never because of tennis," — Marinko Lucic, explaining why he hit his daughter, Mirjana Lucic.

STREAKING

When Steffi Graf captured the Pen Pilot International in New Haven, Connecticut, it kept alive her streak of winning at least one tournament title in each of the last 13 years, beginning in 1985. That makes her third on the list. Martina Navratilova leads by winning a title for 21 consecutive years, 1974-94, with Chris Evert second with 16 years, 1971-86. Tied for fourth with 10 consecu-

tive years of winning at least one tournament are Evonne Goolagong and Sandra Cecchini.

SWARMING TO THE ACTION

The Arantxa Sanchez Vicario-Julie Halard-Decugis match at the Pilot Pen International in New Haven, Connecticut, drew a lot of attention. Play was suspended for almost an hour when a horde of small fans joined the crowd of 7,138 paying fans at centre court. The uncommon disruption was the only blight on another Sanchez Vicario victory.

SOMEONE FAMILIAR?

The U.S. Open came close to having two players named Conchita Martinez in the women's singles draw this year. Seventh-seeded Conchita Martinez of Spain will face Miriam Oremans of the Netherlands in her first-round match. But Conchita Martinez-Granados, also of Spain, lost in the final round of qualifying to Miriam Schnitzer of Germany.

STARTING THE DAY

The New York Stock Exchange began its week with Monica Seles ringing the bell. The three-time U.S. Open champion was accompanied to Wall Street by Chase, Manhattan Bank Chief Executive Officer Walter Shipley. Chase is the sponsor of the women's singles championships at the U.S. Open, is the title sponsor for the season-ending Chase Championships at New York's Madison Square Garden, and is a year-round corporate partner of the Corel WTA Tour.

STRAIGHT HOME

Rod Laver is back home in Newport Beach, California, much sooner than his doctors expected following a stroke. Dr. Eric Aldrich, a neurologist, said the tennis star will undergo therapy at home for up to a year. The 60-year-old Laver suffered the stroke July 27 during taping of a television interview.

SITES TO SURF

U.S. Open: www.usopen.org
Tennis Magazine: www.tennis.com
ATP Tour: www.atptour.com
Corel WTA Tour: www.corelwtatour.com

Casagrande receives six month suspension

MILAN (AFP) — Italian rider Francesco Casagrande was handed a six month suspension by the Italian cycling federation here on Tuesday for returning two positive drugs tests this year.

The 28-year-old, who recently won the San Sebastian Classic and is ranked fifth in the world standings, returned an illegal level of testosterone and epitestosterone in April's Tour of the Trentino and the Tour of Romandy in May.

Casagrande, who was team leader for French outfit Cofidis in July's Tour de France until he was forced out following a fall, had claimed that the high levels returned were due to natural causes.

"I took six or seven tests and they weren't always positive. That means that my natural level of testosterone is variable," he said.

"If I had been using banned substances, they would all have been positive," he added.

The Italian in a bid to prove his innocence had accepted the invitation of the UCI, the sport's world governing body, to undergo endocrinologic tests at the Biochemical Institute in Cologne but the guilty verdict is likely to cost him his ride with Cofidis.



President Jacques Chirac awards Juventus Turin's Zinedine Zidane the Legion of Honour during a ceremony with the players of the French national soccer team at the Elysee palace in Paris Tuesday, Sep. 1, 1998. France won this year's World Cup. (AP Photo/Jacques Brinon)

Chirac presents French team with Legion of Honour

PARIS (AFP) — French President Jacques Chirac presented France's victorious World Cup squad with one of the country's highest awards, Knights of the Legion of Honour, here on Tuesday.

The President, who also awarded the honour to former coach Aimé Jacquet and made World Cup

organiser and French footballing legend Michel Platini an officer of the order, said that their 3-0 win over Brazil in July's final should be used by ordinary French people as a way of getting over their everyday problems.

"I would like the French people who are returning to the daily grind

from their holidays not to forget the World Cup and always keep it close to their hearts," he said.

"They should not just regard it as a sporting achievement but as a victory for all French people," he added.

TODAY AT	PHILADELPHIA 1'	PHILADELPHIA 2'	PLAZA	CONCORD	GALLERIA 1	GALLERIA 2	Holman Yarn Theatre
	Robert Duvall & Tina Turner...in DEEP IMPACT Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	Leonardo Di Caprio...in THE MAN IN THE IRON MASK Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	Comedian Adel Imam...in AL ZA'EM Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, 9:30 Additional shows Thursday and Friday evenings at 12:30	CONCORD 21: Jodi Foster...in CONTACT Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:00, 8:15, 10:45 CONCORD 22: UP CLOSE & PERSONAL Shows: 3:30, 5:30 only	ABDOUN www.cns.com.jo/Galleria GODZILLA Shows: 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:45	ABDOUN www.cns.com.jo/Galleria CITY OF ANGELS Shows: 3:30, 6:30, 8:30 Adel Imam...in AL ZA'EM at 10:30 p.m.	WATCH OUT FOR THE NEW PLAY

Sport

William Jo
Jordan m
after 55-By Samir Jarrak
and Aileen BannanJORDAN'S MEN'S
Jordan's men's team
will be competing in
the World Cup of
Basketball in
Sydney, Australia
this year.Jordan's women's
team will be competing
in the World Cup of
Basketball in Sydney,
Australia this year.
The Jordanian women's
team has been selected
to represent Jordan in
the World Cup of
Basketball in Sydney,
Australia this year.Jordan's men's team
will be competing in
the World Cup of
Basketball in Sydney,
Australia this year.
The Jordanian men's
team has been selected
to represent Jordan in
the World Cup of
Basketball in Sydney,
Australia this year.

Novotn

JORDAN'S MEN'S
Jordan's men's team
will be competing in
the World Cup of
Basketball in
Sydney, Australia
this year.Moscow
RussianMOSCOW (AP) — Facing
special police forces, a
crowd of thousands
gathered outside the
Russian parliament
building on Tuesday
to protest against the
decision to hold the
1998 World Cup in
Russia.The International
Federation of
Association Football
FIFA has insisted the
tournament will go ahead
despite the protests.
FIFA's president, Joseph
Blatter, said the
tournament is a
major event for the
world and that the
protests are a
distraction.Blatter said that the
tournament is a
major event for the
world and that the
protests are a
distraction. He said
that the tournament
will go ahead despite
the protests. He said
that the tournament
is a major event for
the world and that
the protests are a
distraction.

William Jones Basketball Tournament Jordan must beat Korea today after 55-44 win over UAE

By Samir Janakat in Taiwan
and Aileen Bannayan in Amman

JORDAN'S MEN'S basketball team Tuesday beat the UAE 55-44 in their second match at the 21st International William Jones Basketball Tournament currently underway in Taiwan with 10 teams taking part.

Jordan will now have to beat the Korean team Wednesday to ensure qualification to the second round alongside Chinese Taipei as tournament regulations stipulate that the best team qualifies to the semifinals, regardless of its results in the preliminary round.

The Koreans beat the UAE 80-65 and had the day off Tuesday before playing Jordan. To guarantee qualification, Jordan has to win Group 1 since taking second place in case Taipei does not take first place will drop Jordan out of contention because Taipei will then qualify with the first placed team.

Jordan missed a good chance to beat Chinese Taipei Monday when they lost to the hosts 77-72 in the final three minutes of their match.

However, on Tuesday the Jordanian team was in control of the match although the lineup greatly missed four key Jazireh players who did not join the team following their clubs decision to withdraw their national team players citing "bias against the club."

Their teammates Ayman Du'eis and Ashraf Samara seemed to be less effective on the offensive side coupled with the absence of substitute centre Kamal Helou who was hospitalised after abdominal pain.

Jordan led 10-2 in the first five minutes and 29-14 to win the first half 33-25.

Scoring came as follows: Hilal Barakat 14, Mohammad Shamali 12, Nasser Bassam 11, Ayman Du'eis, Fadi Saqqa 6, Ashraf Samara 4, Faisal Nsour 3.

Jordan is playing in Group 1 alongside Chinese Taipei, UAE, Korea, Malaysia, Group 2 includes Japan, Thailand, Saudi Arabia, the Philippines and Costa Rica.

The top two teams in each group will play in the semifinals while the rest will play for 5th-10th places.

Jordan's team had a training camp in Athens and hosted the Iraqi national team in preparation for the week-long event.

The team includes veterans Hilal Barakat and Yousef Zaghoul, in addition to Nasser Bassam, Faisal Nsour, Fadi Saqqa, Mohammad Shamali, Ayman Du'eis and Ashraf Samara. Jan Sahlieb and Kamal Hilo were recalled to the lineup after Ma'an Odeh, Husam Lutfi and Yousef Abu Bakr, Ala' Bilbeisi of Al Jazireh withdrew.

Jazireh players unable to join team

Although the Ministry of Culture and Youth seems to have convinced Al Jazireh Club to send their players to join the team and ensure an advanced standing for Jordan, the issue seems to have been disregarded by the Jordan Basketball Federation (JBF).

According to press reports, JBF president Mudar Majdoub called up federation officials in Amman noting that he received the ministry's letter late after it was misplaced adding that it was "too late now to send the players to Taiwan."

Majdoub said the JBF demanded an apology from Al Jazireh Club who "dealt a heavy blow to the national team by pulling out on the night of their departure."

The JBF had named two other players (one from Orthodox and another from Ahli clubs) to the 20-player lineup after Jazireh's four players declined play.

Minister unveils Pan-Arab Games logo and mascot

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Minister of Culture and Youth Talal Al Hassan

Wednesday unveiled the mascot and logo for the 9th Pan-Arab Games which will be held in Amman next summer.

The minister noted that the logo, designed by Ahd Haddadin, included the colours of the Jordanian flag, the logo of the Arab League which sponsors the event, in addition to the torch. The mascot depicts Jordan's official bird.

The technical committee of the Jordan Olympic Committee (JOC) this week also set the final date for the Games to be held Aug. 15-31.

However, recent reports noted that athletics, one of the most important events at the games, might force the rescheduling of the event as the Pan-Arab Games coincide with the World Athletics Championships.

A recent meeting of the Arab Athletics Federation in Damascus discussed the issue and decided to send Jordan a memorandum to change the date towards the beginning of August noting that the world athletics body, the IAAF, had asked regional and national federation not to hold any events in that period.

Representatives from Arab countries noted that otherwise their athletes would not compete at the Arab Games.

However, JOC technical committee chairman Sari Hamdan insisted that would not be a major problem.

"We can reschedule the athletics events to start at the beginning or towards the end of the games, depending on the most suitable arrangement for all," he said.

Last week, the minister of culture and youth named Issam Aridah, the ministry's secretary-general, as director of Pan-Arab Games.

Jordan Olympic Committee (JOC) Vice-President Mouaffaq Fawwaz said 19 federations which had submitted their plans to the JOC to get funding for their preparations for the Games had so far received JD250,000.

He said the funds covered coaches' salaries, training camps, hosting teams for friendlies, players' allocations including transportation fees, and dietary needs.

So far, 12 primary games have been set while the



Federation (ASF) advanced the date of the upcoming Games to 1999 instead of 2001. The Council of Arab Sports Ministers increased aid to the Kingdom to enable it to prepare infrastructure and update sports facilities ahead of the largest gathering of Arab youth.

Aid from the Arab League had been raised to \$200,000 while the Council of Arab Ministers will grant \$1,000,000 instead of \$700,000.

Additional sponsorship for Jordan's bid will be garnered through slashing the 50 per cent ASF margin of profit on promotion and television coverage in addition to selling television broadcasting rights to private companies, which would secure millions needed to cover costs.

Infrastructure plans include the building of a multi-purpose indoor stadium at Al Hussein Youth City with a capacity for 7,000 spectators; an Olympic-size swimming pool; a track and field stadium and electronic timing machines.

The rest of the facilities would be utilised at private universities and educational institutions that have already expressed their willingness to host some of the events.

Lebanon, which hosted the 8th Pan-Arab Games last summer, received \$28 million from Saudi Arabia and Kuwait to help in construction of sport facilities destroyed during the civil war.

The 1997 Beirut Games witnessed the best Jordanian showing since the Pan-Arab Games were launched. Competing in 14 of the 20 events, Jordan finished 5th overall among 19 competing countries, taking a total of 40 medals, including 10 gold, 8 silver and 22 bronze medals.

Jordan's athletes gained more gold medals in Beirut than in all the past 7 Pan-Arab Games together where they took a total of 49 medals, including 7 gold, 16 silver, 26 bronze.

The Amman Games will be followed by a Special Arab Games for the Handicapped.

The Pan-Arab Games have only been held eight times: Alexandria in 1953, Beirut 1957, Casablanca 1961, Cairo 1965, Damascus 1976, Morocco 1985, Damascus 1992 and Beirut 1997.

Novotna rises to second

NEW YORK (AFP) — Czech star Jana Novotna rose past American Lindsay Davenport to second in the WTA rankings released here on Monday as the US Open began.

But the move came one week late to do Novotna any good in the final Grand Slam tournament of the year. Novotna is the third seed at the \$14 million event while Davenport is second.

Seedings were based on last week's ranking position.

Swiss teenager Martina Hingis is ranked number one by 801 points as she attempts

to defend her U.S. Open title.

1. Martina Hingis (Swi)	5641
2. Jana Novotna (Cze)	4840
3. Lindsay Davenport (USA)	4830
4. Arantxa Sanchez (Spa)	3626
5. Venus Williams (USA)	3123
6. Monica Seles (USA)	2839
7. Conchita Martinez (Spa)	2396
8. Irina Spirlea (Rom)	2204
9. Nathalie Tauziat (Fra)	2161
10. Patty Schnyder (Swi)	2105
11. Amanda Coetzer (Rsa)	2017
12. Mary Pierce (Fra)	1957

Moscow conditions OK — Russian athletics officials

MOSCOW (AP) — Facing a potential boycott by competitors over the country's economic and political crisis, Russian officials assured there will be no safety problems for participants in Saturday's IAAF Grand Prix final.

Their comments came after about 50 top athletes signed a petition last week calling for the prestigious, season-ending meet to be moved to "a more serene venue."

The International Amateur Athletic Federation has insisted the event will go ahead as planned at Moscow's Luzhniki Olympic Stadium. But it's not clear how many of the 180 athletes will be no-shows.

"I can understand those who expressed safety concerns about coming to Moscow," Russian Athletics Federation president Valentin Balakhnichev was quoted as saying in The Moscow Times on Tuesday. "But I can assure you and everyone else that personal safety will not be a factor here."

Claiming Moscow is safer than many other athletics venues around the world, he said the athletes had been unduly influenced by alarmist media coverage of the Russian crisis.

"I have to remind you that it was in Atlanta, not Moscow, where during the 1996 Summer Olympics a bomb exploded in the Olympic park," Balakhnichev said.

He admitted that the economic crisis has caused problems in organizing the meet. On Monday, the electricity and phones at the federation's offices were shut off for failure to pay

the bills. About \$5 million in prize money is to be awarded at the meet.

OFFICE FOR RENT
Commercial office in attractive location in Swayfieh, 350 square meter, With modern decoration.
For interested people call on
Tel. No. 5828386 from 8 am - 4 pm.

FURNISHED VILLA FOR RENT IN BAYADER
Consists of 4 bedrooms (one master), dining and drawing, central heating, car park, garden.
Location: 500m from the U.N. HQ.
Tel.: 5824505

FOR SALE
A piece of land, area: 10,234 sq.m.
Location: Irbid - Ajloun, all facilities available.
For more details write to: Mr. Faisal Ahmad, P.O. Box 57, Irbid - Jordan

COOL & AFFORDABLE
Cheers TO TOP ALL CHEERS BE THERE!!
1st. Cafe @ Turino Sweifiyeh 5863944

THE BRITISH COUNCIL LANGUAGE CENTRE
ARABIC COURSES STARTING
COLLOQUIAL JORDANIAN ARABIC
NEW METHODOLOGY
GUARANTEED SATISFACTION
GUARANTEED PROGRESS
REGISTER NOW
FOR
Autumn Course 1998
(5 September to 21 October 1998)
Registration days: 1 and 2 September 1998 from 12:00 to 5:00 p.m.
Class days and times: Sundays, Tuesdays and every other Wednesday from 18:30 to 20:30
Course Fees: JD 120
Suitable for complete beginners
For further information please contact:
Telephone: (00) (962) (6) 4613368, 4636147 / 8
Fax: (00) (962) (6) 4613389, 4636413
Registered in England as a charity no. 209131
Visit our World Wide Web site at: <http://www.britcoun.org/jordan>
Visit our News Conference at: Information Providers/The British Council

other 7 are still undecided. If over five countries express willingness to compete in a certain event then more games can be added to the original list. There are 10 compulsory games for men and optional ones which the host country could add. The compulsory events are: Basketball, athletics, gymnastics, volleyball, handball, swimming, soccer, wrestling, weightlifting and

cycling. Optional ones include squash, taekwondo and karate.

The eight compulsory games for women are: Basketball, athletics, gymnastics, volleyball, handball, swimming, taekwondo and karate.

Fawwaz reiterated that the Asian Games held in

Bangkok in December will be an invaluable opportunity to prepare and assess the Kingdom's teams' preparedness.

The government has earmarked JD11 million for the Pan-Arab Games with JD4 million allocated for spending this year.

Since the Arab Sports

RIDE THE TRUE SPIRIT OF THE DESERT

Experience the annual Hijaz Railway trip.
Full of excitement, good food & best of all
it benefits the physically handicapped.
On the 3rd of September, Destination Daba'a
An hour & a half trip, Casual Wear,
Exclusive dinner, Arabic tent & Hubby Bubbly.

All for only JD 50.
All proceeds will go to benefit
Al Hussein Society for the Handicapped and
Rehabilitation of the Physically Challenged.
Tickets are available at the
Jordan Marriott & Al-Husseini Society.
For more information call the

